THE

WORKS

OF

Dr. Edward Young.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

REVISED and CORRECTED by Himſelf.

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MDCCLXXVIII.

BRITISH MUSEUM

THE CENTAUR NOT FABULOUS.

IN

Six LETTERS to a FRIEND,

ON THE

LIFE in VOGUE.

Doth he not ſpeak Parables? Ezek.

TO THE

LADY * * * * * *.

MADAM,

YOUR Ladyſhip's character is ſo well known, that the public would blame me, if I preſented not theſe papers to You, who can ſo readily put them into the hands of thoſe who want them moſt.

You will, probably, aſk, why *The* CENTAUR is prefix'd as a title to them. The *men of pleaſure*, the licentious, and profligate, are the ſubject of theſe letters; and in ſuch, as in the fabled Centaur, *the brute runs away with the man:* Therefore I call them *Centaurs*. And farther, I call them Centaurs *not fabulous*, becauſe by their ſcarce half-human conduct, and character, that enig-

matical, and purely ideal figure of the antients, is not unriddled only, but *realized.*

Your ladyſhip's curioſity is great; and you, poſſibly, are willing to know what account antiquity gives of the family, or rather breed, of the *Centaurs.* It is as follows.

Of the Centaurs the moſt celebrated was CHIRON. He was a great botaniſt; and our bitter herb Centory takes its name from him. He thought all herbs bitter, becauſe, being very amorous, he could not find any amongſt them, that could abate the fever in his blood: and he left a complaint in the Greek language to that purpoſe; which Ovid, ſick of the ſame diſeaſe, has tranſlated, and tranſmitted to poſterity in his works.

But he was not only a botaniſt, but a great maſter of muſic: he compoſed an exquiſite piece of harmony for young Achilles his pupil, which charm'd Deidamia to his embraces; by whom he had Pyrrhus, in the court of her father Nicomedes,

a

a little before he dropped his petticoats, and put on his boots for the Trojan war. But what will endear to your ladyſhip CHIRON's memory beyond any the moſt renowned in ſtory, is, that he was not only the venerable father of OPERAS, but was alſo the ſon of a MASQUERADE; the very firſt of thoſe numerous ſons, with which that prolific entertainment has ſince multiply'd mankind.

It happened thus; SATURN, falſe to his good wife OPS, had an intrigue with PHILLYRA. Seeing, one day, his injur'd ſpouſe coming to diſturb their intimacy, for eſcape, he turned himſelf into a HORSE; which occaſioned the noble equeſtrian figure of CHIRON, his ſon.

This, Madam, was the very firſt of MASQUERADES. You ſee the *virtuous* occaſion, and the *laudable* fruits of it. Jupiter's maſquerading in the form of a BULL, was long after. Europe takes its name from EUROPA, with whom he ran away in that ſhape. And your friend *Glodius* ſays, that proba-

bly, we celebrate HORNED MASQUERADES in memory of it. This is the recorded origin of that nocturnal aſſembly; and, indeed, it is evident to common ſenſe, that the maſquerade had never exiſted, but for its *then* accidental, and *ſince* eſtabliſhed, ſubſerviency to love.

Theſe, you will ſay, are wild fables; but they are not without their morals. This fable of Saturn and Ops means, that, jealous CONSCIENCE, the Soul's lawful wife, will ever diſturb *licentious* pleaſure; and that there is no means of eſcaping the perſecution, but by becoming quite *brutal* in it. This, and the following explanations of the myſtical part of antiquity, have been overlooked by former commentators, though BACON was among them.

There is a ſecond moral in the preſent fable. CHIRON, Madam, was a *man*, as much, I mean, as the gayer part of your acquaintance. Why then is he repreſented as a *Centaur?* For two reaſons. He was, as I have ſaid before, the ſon of Saturn; and

and a very lewd old fellow. Repreſenting him as a Centaur, ſignifies, that beings of origin truly celeſtial, may debaſe their nature, forfeit their character, and ſink themſelves, by licentiouſneſs, into perfect beaſts.

Secondly, it ſignifies, that the reſt of the ſpecies, the ſober part of mankind, *prejudiced* by the abandoned manners of ſuch men, may naturally *imagine*, that they hear them neighing after their wives and daughters; galloping with more than human haſte after temptations; and, therefore, rather inſolently prancing on four legs, than decently content with two. This, probably, is the meaning; firſt, becauſe *prejudice* greatly hurts our diſcernment, and transforms objects exceedingly. Secondly, becauſe all allow that a Centaur is a mere creature of the *imagination*.

But though Chiron was the moſt celebrated, yet he was not the moſt antient, of our mythological cavalry. IXION was a primitive man of pleaſure; a gallant of

Juno, and much in favour. Jupiter, leſs in his intereſt, interpos'd a cloud in her ſtead, which not long after was brought to bed of the firſt Centaurs. From that hour Juno commenced a ſcold; and in that character Virgil makes her ſwear, that if ſhe can't find friends in heaven, ſhe will ranſack hell for them.

The amour of IXION imports the great *height* of our expectation, and as great *depth* of our diſappointment, in illicit love. And JUPITER's interpoſing the cloud, intimates, that *heaven* decrees this diſappointment; and that therefore it is madneſs to flatter ourſelves with hopes of the contrary. The fable would farther teach us, that our imagination, fired by paſſion, impoſes not only on our underſtandings, but our very *ſenſes*; which take clouds for goddeſſes; and adore darkneſs as divine.

You ſee, Madam, that gallantry is hereditary in this illuſtrious *houſe*, I ſhould ſay STABLE: That therefore continence may be conſtrued as an argument of baſtardy.

ſtardy. Who then can blame your gay friends for being loth to be baſtardized, and diſinherited; to loſe honour, patrimony, and miſtreſs, together?

They keep clear of this imputation: but there is one particular, that ſpeaks not ſo much in their favour; but rather calls their legitimacy in queſtion. How comes it to paſs that the poſterity of cloud-begotten Sires ſhould be ſo cloudleſs a generation, that not one ſpot of Stupidity can be found about them?

But though *ſpotleſs* in this point, they are not ſo in another; which may ſet all right again. DEIANIRA, as a charm to regain the love of her huſband HERCULES, who was gone aſtray after OMPHALE, queen of Lydia, ſent him a ſhirt dipped in the blood of the Centaur NESSUS. But inſtead of anſwering her honeſt end, it gave him a diſtemper ſo virulent, that it proved mortal. To balance the diſadvantage above, ſome ſay, this diſtemper, at certain ſeaſons, ſtill runs in his *race*. O-

thers rob our modern Centaurs of that credit; imputing their diſorder to another cauſe. And indeed, the preſent ſtory tells us, that ladies may convey ſomewhat elſe, when they mean only to make a preſent of their love.

But *worſe* than *diſtemper* is to be feared. You know, Madam, Ixion's remarkable puniſhment; but probably, not the full import of it. Jupiter, for the father's ſake, deteſting his whole *poſterity*, deſigned Ixion's *wheel*, not only as an emblem of their endleſs *rotation* in unaltered circles of preſent pleaſures; but alſo, as a *prophecy* of their future *pains*; and an exact repreſentation of that rack, which, prudes ſay, they deſerve for their family-feats.

And now, madam, all things conſidered, have I named them wrong? I have named them, as moſt men of antient renown were, from their perſonal qualities and exploits. If you ſtill think me to blame, I flatter myſelf you will change your mind, when you have read the letters following.

This

This addreſs to your ladyſhip, will my ſober reader ſay, is itſelf a *Centaur* of the Pegaſean kind, in which the untamed imagination has too much run away with the judgment, and carried it to enormous heights. If your ladyſhip will venture, however, to be my fellow-traveller, I promiſe to carry you ſafely to an eminence in Fairy-land, from whence you ſhall ſurvey the moſt ſurpriſing and amuſing ſcene. To comply with your taſte, it ſhall even be a ludicrous one. Your favourite Centaurs ſhall be permitted to intrude even into the moſt ſolemn groves of ſacred meditation. Their groteſque figures ſhall continually meet your eye, where you the leaſt expect, and where the ſevereſt critic, and the prude (all but Centaureſſes are prudes with you) will be moſt ſcandalized to find them.

The ſtatues of the renowned are ſet up in public, to kindle honeſt emulation. In moſt ancient ſchools of wiſdom were the buſts, or portraits of the wiſe. What,

madam,

madam, if, for your modern academy, *Hogarth* ſhould draw a Centaur, not, as uſual, with his bow and arrow, but (what will hit my mark as well) with Harlequin's ſabre by his ſide; in a party-coloured jacket of pictured cards, a band of muſic before, a Scaramouch-demon behind him; a weathercock on his head, a rattle in his hand, the decalogue under his feet; and for the benefit of *your ſcholars*, a label out of his mouth, inſcribed, as was the temple of Apollo, with γνῶθι σεαυτόν, in letters of gold [In ME, Know thyſelf]: *they*, your ſcholars, will take it in the true philoſophic ſenſe, and wonder how it came into the mouth of ſo ridiculous, and, to them, ſo foreign, a monſter.

As your ladyſhip's aſſembly, of *all* our hyppodromes is the moſt renown'd, I hope you will favourably accept the wholeſome provender I ſend you. It is of an anti-circean nature; and may, poſſibly, turn your monſters into men.

But I detain you: it is SUNDAY NIGHT: and

and I hear a whole ſtring of your high-bred, unbridled, colts coming in full career; with a blaze in their foreheads, to outbrazen my rebukes: and a ſpring in their heels to bound high at your balls.

Quadrupedante putrem ſonitu quatit ungula campum.

This, madam, you underſtand better than they. But you begin to frown, as you always do at praiſe. Fear not; not one word of compliment ſhall you have from me during our whole journey. I ſhall carry you at firſt a heavy trot thro' rough unbeaten ways, entertaining you unpolitely, with diſcourſe quite foreign to your way of thinking; ſuch as paſſed in correſpondence between me, and a friend, that would equally deſpiſe, and be deſpiſed, among ſuch as you think yours. In the progreſs of our travels (which I muſt honeſtly tell you, will only touch upon, not terminate in, Fairy-land) I ſhall carry you

you into an unknown country, where every thing is real, bright and tranſporting. If there, compelled by the force of ſovereign truth, I ſhould not only aſſert, but convincingly prove, that you are of rank more than imperial, and preſent you with an *unflattering* glaſs, in which, notwithſtanding, your own form ſhall appear with all the charms of an angel——But ſome breathing time is neceſſary to prepare for ſuch an arduous expedition. Therefore, I diſmount for the preſent, and ſay no more.

I am,

MADAM, *&c.*

LET-

LETTER I.

ON

INFIDELITY.

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ON

INFIDELITY.

DEAR SIR,

MAKE no apology for your requeſt; the *world* is your apology. The occaſion calls louder on me, than my *friend* can poſſibly do; and robs me of the credit of having my compliance owing intirely to your deſire. Alarmed at our reigning paſſion for PLEASURE, you preſs me to write on that ſubject. Who can forbear? ſince, if the preſent canine appetite for it ſhould increaſe, where is that Bedlam which can receive a whole nation into proper methods of cure!

Your enjoining me one taſk has engaged me in two. Prevails not INFIDELITY as much as *Pleaſure?* And for ever they muſt prevail, or decreaſe, together. *Infidelity* is the parent of the love of Pleaſure in ſome: *Eve* doubted, and then eat: It is the conſequence of it in others; moſt of Eve's daughters firſt taſte, and then diſbelieve. Pleaſure, and Infidelity, reciprocally generate each other; and that, neceſſarily. For Faith is intirely the reſult of Reaſon; and reaſon is impotent in proportion to the prevalence of ſenſe;

ſenſe; therefore ſenſual Pleaſure begets Infidelity. On the reverſe, he that diſbelieves a futurity, muſt be fond of the preſent, and eagerly ſwallow its unriv'al'd delights; and therefore, Infidelity lets looſe the rein to Pleaſure, and gives it an ample range: He then, who would reduce one, muſt ſtrike at both. *Eve*, and the ſerpent, fell together; Pleaſure, like the firſt, plucks the forbidden fruit; and Infidelity ſays, with the latter, *Thou ſhalt not ſurely die.*

Theſe two, *now* national diſtempers, fairly divides us between them. One ſeizes the body; one, the mind: and where theſe two fiery darts have taken place, the deſtroyer may ſpare a third; his work is done. What then muſt be mine? The taſk is hard to extract them; for there ſeem, at preſent, to be not only poiſoned, but barbed, arrows in the Britiſh heart.

However, I ſhall attempt, firſt, to make the *Infidel*, and then the *Voluptuary*, ſenſible of his error. I ſhall recommend Belief and Virtue, in the room of Doubt and Diſſoluteneſs; and by (I hope) properly adapted *Devotion*, aſſiſt their Repentance; that neceſſary ſtep of tranſition from one of theſe ſtates, to the other. And conſidering into whoſe hands theſe letters will *firſt* come (for I deſign them for the preſs) with regard to yourſelf, I ſhall give you your friend *Euſebius*'s character at large. And with regard to your ſiſter, I ſhall invite her, and her gay favourites, to a Funeral, inſtead of a Ball; and, then, I ſhall enter on ſubjects not unimportant, nor foreign to theſe.

As the mind is our ſuperior part, I ſhall firſt ſpeak of INFIDELITY, and then of PLEASURE. And it ſhall be

be my endeavour ſo to ſpeak of both, as to render it the province of *wit*, rather than *wiſdom*, to reply. What may ſilence wiſdom will but provoke wit, whoſe ambition it is to ſay moſt where leaſt is to be ſaid. You may as well attempt to ſilence an echo by the ſtrength of voice, as a wit by the force of reaſon. They both are but the louder for it; they both will have the laſt word. How often hear we men with great ingenuity ſupporting folly? that is, by wit deſtroying wiſdom; as the ſame ſort of men by pleaſure deſtroy happineſs; prone to draw evil out of good, and ſet things at variance, which, by nature, are allies. Happineſs, and pleaſure, as wiſdom, and wit, are each other's friends, or foes; and if foes, of foes the worſt. Well-choſen pleaſure is a branch of happineſs; well-judging wit is a flower of wiſdom: but when theſe petty ſubalterns ſet up for themſelves, and counteract their principals, one makes a greater wretch, and the other a groſſer fool, than could exiſt without them: Pleaſure *then* calls for our compaſſion, and wit for our contempt. Of how many might the names have ſlept in ſafety, had not their unlucky parts awakened a juſt clamour againſt them?

Have we not a recent, and ſignal inſtance, how far wit can ſet wiſdom at defiance, and, with its artful brilliances, dazzle common underſtanding? That noble author * ſmiles at a certain text of which I ſhall make a ſerious uſe, *viz.* *When the ſons of God came in to the daughters of Men, they begot giants.* So when great talents fall in love with mean purpoſes, they beget errors of an enormous ſize, both in opinion, and in life.

* Lord Bolingbroke.

What

What more enormous than to let Infidelity gather ſuch ſtrength, even in our decline, as to ſtand the terrors of a death-bed, and bequeath proud legacies of its poiſon to the world? Is not this ſtretching out our boldneſs even beyond the day of tryal? carrying the war into the very borders (if I may ſo ſpeak) of that *dread Being* we dare oppoſe? and, deſperately preſuming to atchieve that in our grave, of which a *Julian*, of equal genius, tho' not of equal guilt, deſpaired on a throne; and that the greateſt on earth? Julian was for defeating one prophecy; my lord is for expunging them all; and, with like ſucceſs, *Viciſti Galilæe*, may ſerve for both.

Take I too great a freedom? It is both folly and vice, to bear any man ill-will. But it is alſo folly and vice, not ſo to behave, when occaſion requires, as that our conduct may be *miſtaken* for ill-will, if the prejudiced think fit. Why ſhould our opponents call that *ill-will*, which they, if they were of our opinion, and thought us in a fatal error, and heartily wiſhed us well, would, neceſſarily, do out of perfect love? If the viſcount's admirers reſent out of zeal to his honour, I aſſure them, (though I have had no apparition) that his lordſhip, *now* on my ſide, thanks them not for the favour.

Time was, when thoſe errors, into which he fell, would have been more excuſable. For, that truth was obſcure, and falſehood ſpecious, and opinions endleſs; and that in theſe circumſtances the mind of man could find no reſt, becauſe ſuſpence is anxious, and aſſent almoſt inevitably betrayed into miſtake; *this* was the ſad

and

and juſt complaint of the heathen world, which by God's dereliction had loſt its way, and could not regain it, by the feeble glimmering of natural light.

But of what have *we* to complain, who grope, and wander, and ſtumble, at noon-day? Ours is not ignorance, but perverſeneſs; not want of a guide; but defection from him. Our noble author, ſo much admired, becauſe ſo much in the wrong, declares our light to be darkneſs; and with the boaſted acuteneſs of his ſuperior underſtanding, inſtead of couching thoſe that are blind, is for putting out the eyes of thoſe that ſee. Thus heaven's ſupreme bleſſing on us in the Goſpel, is not annulled only, by our perverſeneſs; but turned to much hurt. We are favour'd to our misfortune, we are enrich'd to our loſs.

The heathens courted truth as a miſtreſs, with warm, and ſincere addreſſes, but could not obtain her. We, having obtained her, treat her, as an abandoned age the lawful partners of their beds, with ſatiety, and diſguſt, and a wild deſire after new embraces. And what have we embraced? *Thus* runs at beſt the palatable doctrine of an age too knowing to need inſtruction; and too proud to bear it from heaven itſelf.

"Whatever notices of duty to God, or man, are im-
"printed in us by nature, or deduced by reaſon, theſe
"are obliging and neceſſary to be performed by all;
"as the natural religion: but as for any poſitive in-
"ſtitutions, or particular forms of religion, theſe are
"of human origin, ſtampt in the political mints of
"craft, intereſt, or ambition; a coin current for the
"vulgar only." It is fit, it ſeems, that the vulgar ſhould

ſhould be fettered, that their ſuperiors may expatiate more at large, and not fear to meet with rivals in them. And, indeed, if the vulgar had the ſame principles, and opinions, with many of their maſters, their maſters would have as fair a chance to have their throats cut, as the murderer to be hanged for it.

As to God, they ſay, "The natural religion com-"mands us to think worthily, and ſpeak reverently, "of Him: but, as ſome have thought churches de-"rogatory to the notions of an Omnipreſent Being; "ſo formal prayers, and ſolemn ſervices, are no way "neceſſary to a Being Omniſcient." They preſent Him (if with any) with a more ſublime and philoſophical devotion, ſtripped of all externals, inviſible as the Deity himſelf, and, indeed, as incomprehenſible to the multitude; whoſe religion, like themſelves, muſt have a *body*, as well as a *ſoul*; or it will evaporate into nothing. Thus, under pretence of a compliment to *one* divine attribute, they rob *all* of the worſhip due to them. They pretend to give God exalted homage, as the Jews arrayed our bleſſed Lord in a purple robe, to mock him, not adore. And here our undiſſembled neglect, if not contempt, of religion, and our barefaced venality ſetting all, even ſouls, to ſale, cannot but recal to mind, that theſe ſiſter iniquities, as if naturally connected, went hand-in-hand (as the hiſtorian tells us), towards the ruin of the *Roman* commonwealth.

Deos negligere, omnia venalia habere. Salluſt.

As to the duties of the ſecond table, they tell us, "that the precepts of nature run evidently againſt injuries,

"juries, and injuſtice; we muſt by no means commit "rapine, or murder; theſe are unſociable crimes: "but as for any pleaſurable enjoyments of ourſelves, "why deprive ourſelves of theſe? why ſtarve at a feaſt "heav'n ſets before us? We cannot conceive God to "be a tyrant; to what end has he given deſires, but "that we ſhould ſatisfy them? or appetites, but that "we ſhould indulge them? Anger and luſt, if conſti-"tutional, are venial ſins."

Thus the ſluices are ſet open for all ſenſuality, promiſcuous incontinence, and ſtudied arts of exceſs, to pour in uncontrouled: and by a ſecond compliment to the Deity, as ſincere as my lord's pretended regard for Chriſtianity, is varniſhed over a ſecond violation of his laws. Bacchus, and Venus, are recalled to a new apotheoſis under a Chriſtian æra; and receive daily ſacrifice in the fortunes, health, and common dignity of man. What voluntary victims are we? And as victims of old were crowned with flowers, how *gaily* does poor, devoted, *Britain* bleed at their altars?

In anſwer to their pleas, it muſt be obſerved, that deſires, and appetites, were not given us out of tyranny, but with an intention doubly kind; as a means both of pleaſure, and virtue, if gratified, and reſtrained, as religion directs. In both views they are bleſſings, but greateſt in the laſt; yet an *Eſau* will ever be for preferring the former.

Thus you ſee, Sir, that both the tables of the decalogue are broken, in a more terrible ſenſe, than they were by Moſes, at his deſcent from the mount; and from no diſſimilar cauſe. The ſufficiency of hu-

man reaſon is the golden calf which theſe men ſet up to be worſhipped; and in the frenzies of their extravagant devotion to it, they trample on venerable authority; ſtrike at an oak with an oſier; the doctrine of God's own planting, and the growth of ages, with the ſudden and fortuitous ſhoots of imagination; abortive births of an hour. Theſe human improvements on divine revelation may be compared to the prophaning the holy Bible with the figure of heathen idols, under *Antiochus Epiphanes;* or rather, to the proud *Roman* emperor, who took the head from Jupiter's ſtatue, and placed his own in its ſtead. Theſe are bold men; but the boldeſt, we hope, may be reclaimed. That Almighty finger which wrote the divine laws twice in ſtone, cannot want power to give them a new impreſſion in their apoſtate hearts.

And that they may the more willingly receive that impreſſion, I ſhall obſerve, that ſetting aſide the immoral conſequences of infidelity, *faith* is neceſſary on its own account, without relation to any thing elſe. Faith is not only a means of obeying, but a principal act of obedience. It is not only a needful foundation; it is not only as an altar, on which to ſacrifice; but it is a ſacrifice itſelf; and, perhaps, of all the greateſt. It is a ſubmiſſion of our underſtandings, an oblation of our idolized reaſon, to God; which he requires ſo indiſpenſably, that our whole will, and affections, though ſeemingly a larger ſacrifice, will not, without it, be received at our hands.

Does any queſtion this? His lordſhip's diſciples will be very apt to queſtion it; yet this is true; unleſs we can ſuppoſe the primitive martyrs to have laid down

down their lives for what was unneceſſary to their ſalvation. For it was not an atteſtation of their doctrine, but their faith, for which the bleſſed apoſtles were perſecuted, and the martyrs ſhed their blood; which they might eaſily have avoided, if they had inſiſted only on the *moral* precepts of their new diſpenſation. Their moral precepts were approved, and welcomed, by the wiſeſt on earth. Nay, our infidels compliment them, eſpecially when they would give themſelves the greater weight in their oppoſition to our creed; yet, poſſibly, they had rather ſubſcribe that abſurd creed, than ſtand obliged to practiſe that morality, which they ſo much commend.

To renounce, or corrupt the faith (one, or both of which is my lord's point) abſtracted from libertine gratifications to follow, or to get rid of fear from thoſe paſt; there ſeems to be ſo little temptation, that I ſhould think none would venture on it, but through ignorance of its guilt. Its guilt therefore I have pointed out; which ſhews that modern deiſm, how laudable ſoever the deiſt's life is, is criminal in itſelf. A virtuous life, riſing from a corrupted faith (if that could poſſibly be), is as an angel of light ſupported by a cloven foot; which many ſeem not to believe, otherwiſe they would not be ſo often pleading the virtue of deiſts, as a full abſolution of that ſect: whereas we are expreſsly told, that the *juſt ſhall live by faith*; that is, even the juſt ſhall not live, that is, be ſaved, without it.

But though a corrupt faith is ſufficiently criminal in itſelf, yet its guilt rarely reſts there; it often produces an irregular life. On the contrary, vicious

practice is ſure to produce a corrupt faith; or an abſolute renunciation of all belief: for the notices of good and ill are ſo fairly imprinted on our nature, and the practice of them is ſo ſtrongly guarded by conſequent hope and fear, that no conſcience is ſo hardened, as to ſin without the ſhelter of ſome pretence. The guilty huſh conſcience with ſuch ſoft whiſpers as theſe; Either, heaven takes not ſuch cognizance of our actions; or, is not ſo much concerned about them, as ſome imagine; or, its mercy will not ſuffer it to be juſt; or its juſtice will not ſuffer it to be ſo ſevere, as to puniſh temporal guilt with eternal pain: all which are corruptions of the faith. Or if theſe opiates will not do, they proceed to *renounce* the faith. They give themſelves a quite quieting draught of abſolute unbelief: a Deity is a dream, and Religion a cheat. And thus they throw off their fears, their God, and common ſenſe, together; and are deplorably gay, till they are irremediably undone. How happy might ſuch wretches be, if they knew what a trifle *pleaſure* is to *peace!* A very trifle is it, even when pleaſure is innocent: but when not, when pleaſure is an enemy to peace: then, then indeed, it is a trifle no more.

There is a text which muſt give ſome ſurprize to thoſe who doubt whether a bad life occaſions a *falſe* or *no* belief. It is ſaid, there *muſt* be hereſies, that is, falſe beliefs. And why? There is certainly no fatal neceſſity for them, from God's deſtination—No; but there is a *moral* neceſſity for them from man's corruption. A heart boiling with violent and vicious paſſions, will ſend up infatuating fumes to the head; and a delirious giddineſs of head will make a man fall

fall into the groſſeſt miſtakes, be his natural abilities what they will. A lewd and obſtinate will fails not to blind the ſtrongeſt judgment, as *Delilah* the man of might.

Many, even of thoſe that hold faſt the faith, may, perhaps, not have obſerved, that faith is doubly precious; it is our duty, and our refuge; nay, it is *doubly* our refuge. It reſcues our paſſions from flaming into vice; and it reſcues our underſtanding from darkening into errors. The ſame qualification which is neceſſary for us in order to pleaſe God, is as neceſſary to ſecure ourſelves from impoſture; and not only from ſuch impoſtures as *others* may prepare for us, but from our *own*. It is our ſole ſecurity againſt our framing impoſitions to deceive our own judgments (as ſhewn above), as well as againſt our incurring crimes to defeat our own ſalvation.

As to the myſterious articles of our faith, which infidels would by no means have me forget; "Who," ſay they, "can ſwallow them?" In truth, none but thoſe who think it no diſhonour to their underſtandings to credit their Creator. *Socinus*, like our infidels, was one of a narrow throat; and, out of generous compaſſion to the Scriptures (which the world, it ſeems, had miſunderſtood for 1500 years) was for weeding them of their myſteries! and rendering them, in the plenitude of his infallible reaſon, undiſguſting, and palatable to all the *rational* part of mankind. Why ſhould honeſt Jews and Turks be frighted from us by the Trinity? he was for making religion familiar and inoffenſive. And ſo he did; and unchriſtian too. Thoſe things which our hands can graſp, our

underſtandings cannot comprehend. Why then deny to the Deity Himſelf the privilege of being one, amidſt that multitude of myſteries which He has made?

Here let me obſerve, what perhaps has eſcaped your notice, with regard to the bleſſed Trinity, which gives our unbelievers the greateſt offence. The *revelation* of it is not only neceſſary for our underſtanding the foundation of Chriſtianity, but is alſo, I conceive, an abſolute demonſtration of its truth. Becauſe it is a myſtery which by *nature* could not poſſibly have entered into the imagination of man; which they, who moſt explode it, confeſs by their obſtinate rejection of it. For why do they reject it, but on that very account? Our opponents therefore, in ſome meaſure, ſupport us in our attachment to this ſupreme article of our creed, which they moſt condemn; and (what is ſomewhat remarkable in favour of our faith) ſupport us in it by the very cauſe for which it is condemned by them.

Myſteries, that is, thoſe great and hidden things of our religion, whoſe truth we are aſſured of by Divine Authority, but the manner of their being ſurpaſſes our underſtanding: ſuch as the plurality of perſons in the Divine Unity: God manifeſt in the fleſh: the operation of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the believers: the ſpiritual preſence of Chriſt in the euchariſt: the uniting our ſcattered parts from the duſt of death. All which the Scriptures have expreſsly delivered as catholic truths. Several of theſe, ſeveral heretics have rejected; and the *Socinians* have, in a manner, rejected them all. Faith in theſe

theſe is more acceptable to God, than faith in leſs abſtruſe articles of our religion; becauſe it pays that honour which is due to His teſtimony; and the more ſeemingly incredible the matter is which we believe, the more reſpect we ſhew to the relator of it. This (putting in a *caveat* againſt the ridicule of infidels) may be called *heroic* faith, correſpondent to heroic virtue, at which, out of prudence, they muſt ſmile.

This heroic faith may be more *acceptable* to God (ſome may ſay); but, ſure, not more *uſeful* to man. It may have a good influence on *another* life; but what account does *this* find in it? Who can ſhew me the *moral* effects of it?—From faith in theſe myſteries, man neceſſarily, and more juſtly, adores the incomprehenſible majeſty of God; and more juſtly and perfectly contemplates his own littleneſs, and diſproportion of thought to thoſe truths that are vouchſafed to his faith. Hence he heartily renders God a due honour for his teſtimony; and a due acknowlegement of his profeſſed care of his church; and a due thankfulneſs for the mercy of his revelation. He renders a due obedience to his proper government, as a Chriſtian, that is, the authority of the church; and a due aſſiſtance to the public peace, which is never ſafely built but on unity of judgment. And as to his *private* virtue, he keeps in due ſubjection the pride of underſtanding, that moſt vicious affection of the mind, which if let looſe, would be attended with a multitude of evils; and with one in particular, which occaſions this letter. But though we could ſee none of theſe temporal advantages, yet would it be moſt reaſonable in us to believe; unleſs we, who think it right to believe implicitly in thoſe on whom our fortune

depends, think it wrong to believe implicitly in Him, on whom depends our ſalvation.

But there is, I confeſs, ſome error, on our own part, with regard to myſteries. We, perhaps, have given ſome ſmall excuſe for our infidels contempt of myſteries, by more pious, than prudent, attempts, that have been ſometimes made toward an explanation of them. A myſtery explained is a myſtery deſtroyed: for what is a myſtery, but a thing not known? But things not known may reaſonably be believed; in the very ſtrangeſt things there may be truth, and in things very credible, a lie *.

It is with our underſtandings as with our eyes. Both have their myſteries: both have objects beyond their reach; ſome accidentally, ſome abſolutely. We ſee not thoſe objects that are placed in an obſcure light, becauſe there is a defect in the medium: we ſee not thoſe that are veſted with too much light, becauſe there is a weakneſs in the ſenſory, unable to ſuſtain ſuch ſtrong impreſſions. Thus it is with the objects of our underſtandings: ſome things we know not, for want of being duly informed. Salvation was a myſtery to the Gentiles; but ceaſed ſo to be, when revealed by the goſpel. Other things we know not, becauſe they exceed the meaſure of our comprehenſion. Thus, ſome articles of our faith are ſuch myſteries, as by no revelation can ceaſe to be ſo. They muſt be myſteries, while men are men; while yet unbleſſed with powers that are not indulged to this imperfect ſtate. As it is bold and vain, ſo, perhaps, it

* Quintil. Inſtitut. l. iv. c. 2.

it has even been prejudicial to the truth, to labour at rational evictions of ſacred myſteries; for, by theſe means, men attempt to comprehend the Divine Nature, by putting it under ſome injurious diſguiſe; as we venture to gaze at the ſun, after we have watched it into a cloud.

God forbad images of Himſelf, becauſe it is impoſſible that any ſenſible repreſentations could do otherwiſe than derogate from Him that is inviſible: nor can the diminiſhing imagery of our notions derogate leſs from Him that is incomprehenſible. I preſume not to cenſure thoſe who have made uſe of illuſtrations to the proper ends of piety; all I mean, is, that fallible ratiocination ſhould not be made the grounds of faith, whoſe proper baſis is infallible teſtimony. Nor is it longer faith than while it reſts on *that*; for when I believe, not ſo much what is revealed, as what my own reaſon pronounces to be true; I believe not God, but myſelf. I aſſume, not obey; and give proof rather of the pride, than humiliation, of my reaſon; whereas its humiliation is a principal end aimed at by God's ſo ſtrict demand of our faith.

And, indeed, far from humiliation, and even common modeſty, muſt he be, who hopes to give light to thoſe myſteries which St. Paul, with all his learning, eloquence, and inſpiration, pronounced to be to the Jews a ſtumbling block; and to the Greeks, thoſe moſt ſubtle of men, fooliſhneſs: that is, they thought it folly to believe them, becauſe unintelligible; and becauſe they did not apprehend, that there was any Divine authority to compel their belief. And ſuch Greeks have *we*; Epicurean Greeks, ſenſual, ſubtle,

and unbelieving; and whoſe celebrated writings are of equal authority with

Quicquid Grecia mendax
Audet in hiſtoria. JUV.

Men, who reject divine aſſiſtance, as too officious, with a ſort of diſdain, as if it affronted their own abilities; and whoſe preſumptuous opinions are induſtriouſly ſpread, by peſt-men, through the land.

With the groſs and horrid effects of ſuch opinions, and their conſequences, the diſtempered age groans, and kingdoms ſhake, and judgments threaten. And well they may. How many private families have their infamous ſecrets? how many public tranſactions their barefaced iniquity? high courts of juſtice have their *ius datum ſceleri*, and bluſh not to plead precedent for the violation of their own laws; and the corruption of the times, for more corruption ſtill. Is not this heaping mountain upon mountain againſt heaven? And think we heaven will never return the blow?

We have had already, nay *now* have, *ſome* light and merciful admonitions from heaven. But can it be thought, that an age of judgments and paſtimes; of riots and diſtreſſes; of exceſſive debts, and exceſſive expence; of public poverty, and private accumulation; of new ſects in religion, and new ſallies in ſin; and every other contradiction to common ſenſe, does not call for *more?* I, Sir, am faſtened in the country; nor know I much of that larger and fouler ſink of debauchery in which you breathe. But even here, I know

know too much. Where is that village that has not its ſuicides of intemperance; or its bold adventurers for ſtill quicker death from the hand of public juſtice? And, to confirm that opinion above advanced, of the cloſe tie and mutual growth of vice and unbelief, almoſt every cottage can afford us one that has *corrupted*, and every palace one that has *renounced*, the faith.

I know, Sir, you will tell me, that it is the buſineſs of our common piety, to deplore; of our prayers, to obſtruct; and of our lives, rather than our harangues, to confute them. True; for if our Chriſtianity is to be found no where but in our books, the Chriſtian and Infidel, may drop their diſpute. A Tillotſon, and a Bolingbroke, are on the ſame ſide: their conteſt is but verbal; their agreement is eſſential, and their aſſociation will prove eternal.

But, Sir, it is our duty to ſpeak and write (if we can), as well as live, againſt the enemies of our Chriſtian faith. I proceed therefore to obſerve, that the Viſcount's arguments againſt the authority of the Scriptures has been long ſince anſwered. But he is not without precedent in this point. This repetition of already refuted arguments ſeems to be a deiſtical privilege, or diſtemper, from which few of them are free. Even echoes of echoes are to be found amongſt them; which evidently ſhews, that they write not to diſcover truth, but to ſpread infection; which old poiſon re-adminiſtered will do, as well as new; and it will be ſtruck deeper into the conſtitution, by repeating the ſame doſe. Beſides, new writers will have new readers. The book may fall into hands untain-

ted before; or, the already infected may ſwallow it more greedily in a new vehicle; or, they that were diſguſted with it in one vehicle, may reliſh it in another. I therefore aſk pardon: what I miſ-called diſtemper, I find, on ſecond thoughts, is perfect prudence; but ſuch prudence as, with them, would throw a chriſtian writer into the bottom of contempt.

There are more reaſons for our deiſts to be diſſatisfy'd with themſelves than thoſe already given. *Infidel* is an opprobrious name; but time was, when *deiſm* was the true religion; and they are for ſtill retaining the credit once due to that character. It is therefore fit for a friend to Chriſtianity, nor leſs fit for a friend to them, to take notice, that it is impoſſible for a *good* man, that is, one aiming at the divine favour above all things, to reject an offered revelation, without inquiring into its title to the high character it aſſumes; and, that it is as impoſſible (in my opinion) for a *reaſonable* man to reject the Chriſtian *revelation*, if he *does* inquire. He, therefore, who continues a deiſt, in a land enlightened by the Goſpel, muſt be wanting in goodneſs, or reaſon; muſt be either criminal, or dull. None, therefore, can be more miſtaken than they, that profeſs deiſm for the credit of ſuperior underſtanding, or for the ſake of exerciſing a more pure, and perfect, virtue. Yet theſe are the only pretences which they do, or dare, avow, for their fatal choice. Muſt not then their *real* motive be of a nature which they think prudent to conceal?

But to conceal it, is not eaſy: for *reaſon*, our of itſelf defective reaſon, in many points of the laſt moment to man, wants, wiſhes, calls for a *revelation*; and cannot but

but accept, when offer'd, what it calls for: that is, reaſonable deiſts cannot but become Chriſtians, where the Goſpel ſhines.

Or argue thus (for it admits of various proof:) God Almighty would not have made a revelation, but in order to be received. And by whom received? Doubtleſs by the reaſonable, and good. And if by ſome of them, why not by all? And if all the reaſonable, and good, receive it; what muſt they be that reject it? Therefore revealed religion rejected, proves natural religion diſobeyed. I ſaid, above, that deiſts were blameable, how good ſoever their lives might be: But *now* it ſeems to appear, that their lives cannot be good. Others, perhaps, have forborne ſpeaking ſo plain, out of charity. I venture on it out of what I conceive to be charity, greater ſtill: for nothing that can awaken them can be kindly ſuppreſſed.

Cornelius, the centurion, though one of the beſt of men, thought not the belief of the Goſpel unneceſſary to his ſalvation. But modern deiſts, wiſer, not better than he, have their objections to the Goſpel. Their chief objection is againſt its *myſteries*. There is nothing myſterious in it, but with regard to things, which we either *can not*, or *need not*, underſtand. *Can* not, through the limitation of the human intellect; or *need* not, through the ſufficiency of other means, and motives, for our leading good lives. To what amounts, then, this capital objection, and charge againſt it? To no more than this, *viz.* That Chriſtianity performs not what is impoſſible to be performed: for it is as impoſſible for its Author, Almighty God, to do *more* than is needful for his gracious end, *viz.* the good lives of

of mankind; as to do what, in its nature, is impoſſible to be done.

Indeed, all their objections to Chriſtianity ſeem to be no more, nor leſs, than playing the beſt card they have; than uſing the beſt expedient they can think of; to keep themſelves in countenance, and the world in the dark, as to the true motive of their apoſtacy. Nor are their objections to be looked on, in thoſe that are men of ſenſe, as an argument of their diſbelief, but their diſlike. They wiſh not the myſteries removed; for that would rob them of a favourite objection. They wiſh not the darkneſs of the myſteries remov'd; but transferred; transferred from the *doctrines*, to the *moral precepts*. Theſe are without a cloud; theſe are too plain for their purpoſe. None ever fully complied with theſe, but was eaſily reconciled to the myſteries of the Goſpel. The diſguſted, deſpotic heart commands the paſſive, obedient head, to fight its unjuſt quarrel, and ſay it is its own: So that *Satan* may blame them for ſome degree of hypocriſy in his favour; may blame them for only pretending to diſbelieve. If, on the other hand, Chriſtians were not alſo hypocrites; hypocrites, I mean, as to practice; they would rob the deiſts of their moſt plauſible plea againſt us; and either leſſen their numbers, or increaſe their ſhame.

I hope that ſome of the deiſts; at leaſt, ſome of thoſe whoſe principles are endangered by them; may admit ſome little impreſſion from what has been offered. I hope they may diſcern, and own the *ſelf-accuſation* which is, evidently, implied in our deiſts renunciation of Chriſtianity; or, if I am miſtaken, that they will

ſet

ſet me right; for if I have wrong'd them, I have wrong'd them much. For, in what a diſadvantageous light appear theſe deſerters from chriſtianity in theſe pages? A *deiſtical* tongue, a *chriſtian* conſcience, and a partly *pagan* heart! What a ſad compoſition is this? It is a far heavier charge than I wiſh to find true.

But it is a natural queſtion, "How comes it to paſs, "that men of parts ſhould ſo much diſaffect the Scrip- "tures, ſo admirable, and ſtill more and more admi- "rable, in proportion to the diſcernment of their "reader?"

Can it be from *ignorance?* It may be ſo, if their hearts are worſe than their heads; for there are parts of Scripture which none but a good man can well underſtand: "Rejoice always; and again I ſay, Rejoice." This muſt appear to the vicious abſurd, becauſe impracticable, and therefore un-inſpired. To rejoice in tribulation, they have neither cauſe, nor power. Thus, bad manners, almoſt neceſſarily, render men infidels to holy writ. On the contrary, a good life is a key to the Scriptures. "The ſecret of the Lord is with thoſe "that fear him." A text this, as unintelligible to the vicious as the former. As he has had no experience, ſo neither has he any comprehenſion of its truth. The good man comprehends, and *feels* it too. Thus the Scripture, like the cloudy pillar which it records, is light to the true *Iſraelite*, but darkneſs to the *Egyptians*. Hence acuteſt underſtandings in religious debates often loſe their edge.

Can the cauſe we ſeek, be *vanity?* It may be ſaid of the Viſcount's writings as of *Cataline*, *Satis eloquentiæ, ſapientiæ*

ſapientiæ parum. Had his eloquence been leſs; had thoſe talents been denied him, which flattered him with hope of ſhining a firſt luſtre in the lettered world, he had eſcaped a temptation which has evidently been too hard for his prudence; and a common-ſiz'd head had, probably, left his heart in ſafety. So formidable a poſſeſſion is an immortal pen (if his *is* immortal); a pen more fatal to its maſter, than *Cato*'s ſword.

Or might not *envy* be the cauſe we ſeek? "But can "theſe men envy Chriſtians, whom they quit on ac- "count of our unhappy miſtake?" Man is not only deſirous, but ambitious too, of happineſs. He but ill bears that another ſhould be happier than himſelf; becauſe ſuperior happineſs is a natural argument of ſuperior wiſdom or worth. The man of a libertine life knows that the good Chriſtian, if his religion is true, is, on the whole, much happier than himſelf. Therefore he wiſhes it to be falſe; and endeavours to find it ſo. And ſtrong endeavours to be in the wrong, Heaven will puniſh with ſucceſs. It will permit them to believe their own lye: that is, to fall on their own ſword, which was drawn againſt the truth.

Non hos quæſitum munus in uſus. Virg.

And I am the more inclined to impute their oppoſition to *envy*, rather than *vanity*; becauſe pure vanity is conſiſtent with good-nature; and may be a very candid thing: But envy has bitterneſs, and ill-will; and ridicule is the genuine child of ill-nature; ridicule, that offenſive brat of which they are ſo fond.

Now though nothing is more improper in important debates

debates than raillery; yet can I make ſome apology for them. They may, poſſibly, perceive, that the load on their own miſgiving conſciences, would ſink them, were it not for the light expedient of forced mirth, like a bladder filled with wind, to keep them above water: and that they, ſometimes, have their doubts, and miſgivings of heart, it is reaſonable to believe. To give full eſtabliſhed ſecurity is the incommunicable privilege of the Goſpel.

For the reaſons above, I venture to ſet down *envy* among the cauſes of infidelity, though (I think) by others overlooked. And further, I believe it to be a *very principal* cauſe of *lettered* infidelity in the world. Other, but not great vices are, doubtleſs, the chief cauſe of infidelity in lower, and illiterate, life; where ſenſe has no rival in thought, but tyrannizes alone.

But whatever is the cauſe of their infidelity, be it *ignorance*, *vanity*, *envy*, or any other vice, their infidelity will naturally have ſome effect in *our* favour. It is much to be hoped, that it will put us on our guard, and make us better men. Our leading a bad life, is playing into their hands. It is giving them an argument in the debate, againſt ourſelves. Though the argument is bad, yet it is an argument ſtill. And ſince they have none *but* bad arguments, and ſuch they *will* make uſe of, we ſhould not increaſe the number. This is like furniſhing them with ammunition to protract the war: and though the war protracted will not hurt us, yet will it hurt them; and, as we are Chriſtians, *that* ſhould give us an equal concern.

Secondly,

Secondly, Chriſtianity may thank its *opponents* for much new light, from time to time, thrown in on the ſublime excellence of its nature, and the manifeſtation of its truth; opponents, in *ſome* ſort, more welcome than its *friends*; as they do it ſignal ſervice, without running it in debt; and have no demand on our gratitude for the favours they confer. The ſtronger its adverſaries, the greater its triumph: the more it is diſputed, the more indiſputably will it ſhine. With what pious pleaſure muſt you ſee the brighteſt talents ſtriking at it, with the moſt hearty good-will, yet dropping harmleſs, like old Priam's ſpear?

Telum imbelle ſine ictu
Conjecit; rauco quod protinus ære repulſum,
Et ſummo clypei nequicquam umbone pependit. Virg.

Chriſtianity, that great ſupport of man's welfare, and God's glory, like a well-built arch, the greater load of oppoſition, and reproach, its enemy lays on it, the ſtronger it ſtands.

Thirdly, Their antichriſtian writings may *detect* them: for ſince (as ſhewn above) a falſe faith, or no faith at all, is the natural conſequence of a bad life, it is poſſible that the gentlemen in the oppoſition, while they are giving us their opinions, may be giving us *more*: They may be diſcovering their *morals*, while they mean only to teach us their *creed*: And, thus, they may carry, like *Bellerophon*, their own condemnation, while they imagine they are, graciouſly, conveying intelligence, and new light, to mankind: So that the old proverb, *Bellerophontis literæ*, may be a proper motto for the learned labours of them all.

But

But condemnation from others will be much more ſupportable than their own; if that ſhould fall on them. And where is he on whom it ſhall not one day fall? If a man born blind, who had never ſo much as heard of the ſun, moon, and ſtars, ſhould ſuddenly receive ſight; he would not be more aſtoniſhed at the firſt ruſhing in of thoſe *material* glories, than would the man, by vice ſtruck blind to religion, be, at his firſt conviction of heavenly truths, *viz.* divine manifeſtations, awful revelations, fulfilled prophecies, numberleſs miracles; and one unbroken chain of marvellous expedients, from before creation to this hour, for our ſalvation; thoſe ſpiritual luminaries; thoſe (dare I ſay) ſun, moon, and ſtars of the *moral* world; if God ſhould give him light. Till then, walking in darkneſs, he muſt miſtake danger for ſafety, ſhame for glory, and miſchief for pleaſure. Like the blinded of *Sodom*, he reaches eagerly after, and preſſes hard for, enjoyment; but of real enjoyment, of true felicity, he cannot find the door; as I propoſe ſhewing in my *next*.

If ſome part of it may ſeem too ſevere, I muſt obſerve, that no man can ſtrike fire with a feather. A fire elemental is diffuſed through all nature, though lock'd up in dark matter, and unapparent in moſt parts of our globe. Thus, I conceive, that there is divine grace ſpread through all hearts (where not intirely quenched by vice), though inactive, and dormant in them. No ſlight animadverſion can awake it. It muſt be a blow of ſome force, that ſtrikes it out of a heart of flint. And ſuch there *muſt* be in theſe days of darkneſs, when few ſparks of grace are apparent.

Such

Such there *muſt* be when infidelity prevails; for infidelity, and faith, are the day and night of the moral world. One reveals, the other hides heaven from our thoughts. Happy am I if this Letter ſhall occaſion the ſmalleſt dawn on but one ſingle heart, in this our grand eclipſe. With you, dear Sir, the dawn is long ſince paſt; and that you may continue in the light, till heaven, at that knock of *faith* which only will be heard, ſhall admit you into perfect day, where *undiſputed* truth, and *unmiſtaken* pleaſure, with endleſs glory, crown the juſt; this is the prayer of

Your Affectionate

Humble Servant.

LETTER

LETTER II.

ON

PLEASURE.

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DEAR SIR,

I Now proceed to ſay ſomething of *Pleaſure*; that ſubject which you ſo warmly recommend; not aware, I believe, that it may be long before men, whoſe faults ſet the public eye at defiance, will learn to bluſh when alone in their cloſets. And till then, what hope of much reformation from the pen? Beſides, though our tranſgreſſions with regard to pleaſure are great; yet they are not new. To the ſcandal of the antediluvians be it ſpoken, there were Britiſh iniquities before the flood. To ſuch a degree have all moral ſubjects been exhauſted, that it is difficult for a writer on them not to *repeat*, though he is no plagiary. But your deſires are an apology for my deficiencies in compliance with them.

Whether

Whether we are more hardened in infidelity, or ſoftened in pleaſure may be diſputed: but none can deny that the love of pleaſure is the root of every crime. Theft, murder, perjury, are a few of its fatal fruits; nor the worſt. But I ſhall not dip ſo deep in its conſequences; yet deep enough to render the name of a *man of pleaſure*, which ſome effect for their honour, not only ridiculous, but deteſtable.

What an extravagant dominion does *pleaſure* exerciſe over us? It is not only the peſtilence that walketh in darkneſs; but an arrow that deſtroyeth at noon-day. The moon hides her face at our midnight enormities; and the morning bluſhes on our unfiniſhed debauch. I am almoſt tempted to ſay, that our impudent folly puts nature out of countenance. But there is no need by words to exaggerate the fatal truth. Our luxury is beyond example, and beyond bounds; it ſtops not at the poor: even they that live on alms are infected with it.

It has often been obſerved, that it is with ſtates, as with men. They have their birth, growth, health, diſtemper, decay, and death. Men ſometimes drop ſuddenly by an apoplexy; ſtates by conqueſt; in full vigour, both. As man owes his mortality to original ſin; ſome ſtates owe their fall to ſome defect, or infelicity, in their original conſtitution. But contracted diſtemper is the moſt common ruin of ſtates, and men. And what national diſtemper more mortal than our own? On the ſoft beds of luxury moſt kingdoms have expired.

If cauſes ſhould not fail of their uſual effect; if our national

national diſtemper, far from being cutaneous at preſent, ſhould reach the vitals of our ſtate; how applicable to this opulent, proud, profligate metropolis (which calls the ſea her own, and whoſe vices, more diffuſive, are without a ſhore) would be the prophet's ſacred dirge over antient Tyre; whoſe ſea-born wealth, and hell-born iniquity, let it not be ſaid, was but a prelude to our own? And yet if we proceed in our infernal career, that moſt infamous reproach may become but too true.

The ſublime, and moſt memorable words run thus; and I cannot but think that, at preſent, they muſt have a formidable ſound in a Britiſh ear. "Is this the "joyous city? whoſe antiquity is of days remote? "whoſe merchants were princes, and her traffickers "the honourable of the earth? whoſe revenue was the "harveſt of rivers? and her exchange the mart of na-"tions? who ſat as a queen; ſtretched out her hand "over the ſeas; and ſhook the kingdoms? But ſhe is "fallen! ſhe is fallen! Heaven has ſtained the pride "of all glory. How ſorely muſt you be pained at "the report?"

Has not Britain reaſon to be more deeply ſtruck with this part of Scripture than the reſt of mankind? The prophecy as yet, indeed, through mercy, is unfulfilled in us: but if Britain continues, like Tyre,—"To ſing "as an harlot; to take the harp; to make ſweet me-"lody; ſing many ſongs; turn to her hire; and com-"mit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world,"—her fall is to be feared, unleſs the fate of moſt former empires betray us into miſtake; and that national poiſon which has ever proved mortal, is mortal no

more. If the fate of kingdoms is lodged in a juſt, and impartial hand, what but the groſſeſt ſelf-flattery can baniſh our fears? And if our fears are baniſhed, leave it not unobſerved, that our very want of fear is a proof of our danger: for Heaven infatuates, when it determines to deſtroy.

"But ſuch a general face of affluence, and gaiety. "Are theſe ſigns of ruin?" Not ſigns only, but cauſes of it too. Not Babylon alone has been ſmitten at a banquet, and periſhed in its joys. Moſt nations have been gayeſt, when neareſt to their end; and, like a taper in the ſocket, have blazed as they expired.

Were our fathers to riſe from their graves, they would conceive that their fortune had thrown them on ſome day of public feſtivity, nor imagine that every day was drunk of the ſame diſeaſe. By our gaiety we ſeem to celebrate the perpetual triumph of the millennium; by our vices, to add to it the manners of the antediluvian world; and, by our ſecurity under them, to put full confidence in the divine promiſe that the world ſhall be drowned no more. If with the vices of the antediluvians, we had their years too, more might be ſaid in our excuſe: but to weigh ſuch a moment againſt eternity, ſhews that the balance is in very weak hands. The world, which the divine vengeance ſwept away for its enormities, was incapable of ſo great a guilt.

But in ſo general a diſſolution of manners, are there none that ſtand intitled to more particular blame? Are not our great patrons of luxury a ſort of anti-Curtii, who leap into the gulph for the ruin of their country?

country? Their country's ruin they threaten by the malignity of their example; while by the profusion of their expence they nearly finish their own. What a weakness is self-denial? what idle self-tormentors are penitents? what wretched lunatics, or gross suicides, are the noble army of martyrs, if *these* men are in the right? How *cheap* would their pleasures come, if they cost them nothing more than their health, credit, and estates?

Pleasure is in some sort more pernicious than direct vice. Vice has, naturally, some horror in it. It startles, and alarms the conscience, and puts us on our guard. Pleasure, under the colour of being harmless, has an opiate in it; it stupifies and besots. In the soft lap of pleasure conscience falls asleep. Vice, losing its horror, becomes familiar. And as vice increases, some expedient becomes necessary to reconcile us to ourselves. Thus, looking out for some shadow of excuse, we naturally slide into groundless doubts, and become infidels out of pure self-defence.

And, as pleasure makes us infidels, by stupifying the conscience; so it makes us very bad husbands of temporal enjoyments, by darkening our understandings; and this unqualifies us for the very point to which *alone* we pretend.

It is this cloud on their understanding which hinders our voluptuaries from discerning, that their blind rage for pleasure turns blessings into their reverse. Birth, education, and abundance, are great blessings; but, abused by pleasure into motives and instruments of indulgence, birth is more ignoble than obscurity; know-

ledge is more pernicious than ignorance; and abundance more a misfortune than want. Men of rank (and of ſuch I ſpeak) if wrong, can ſcarce avoid ſinning beyond themſelves. How peſtilential their example falls on the lower world, which, under the welcome force of ſuch illuſtrious authority, turn diſſolute, as much for the ſake of their credit and fortune, as of their luſts; pride, and intereſt, bringing needleſs ſuccour to looſe deſire; and Tyburn has ſometimes reaped, what aſſemblies have ſown. Great men in the wrong, are powerful engines of miſchief, and, like burſting bombs, deſtroy themſelves, and all around them.

And as to the two ſupreme bleſſings, and glories of man, their reaſon and immortality; theſe, as they manage it, flame out into vengeance too great to be mentioned without horror. Their reaſon ſerves only to render them more guilty; and their immortality to render endleſs the ſad wages of their guilt.

It is this cloud on our underſtanding which makes us ſo little maſters in the very ſcience we profeſs. Happineſs is our ſtudy, but are we not dunces in it? We know not, or ſeem not to know, that all *real* enjoyment lies within the compaſs of God's commands; which abridge not, but defend them: that when we dip too deep in pleaſure, we ſtir a ſediment, that renders it impure, and noxious: that (as much a paradox as it may ſeem) the beſt means of arriving at the true pleaſures of the body, is to preſerve, and cultivate, the powers of the ſoul; and that a good underſtanding is, in man, the ſource, and ſecurity, of mere *animal* delight.

Let

Let theſe gentlemen take notice that I am not againſt enjoyment; I am as great a lover of it, as they; for without a reliſh of the good things of life, we cannot be thankful. Enjoy, but enjoy reaſonably, and thankfully to the great Donor; *that* will ſecure us from exceſs. To *enjoy*, is our wiſdom, and our *duty*; it is the great leſſon of human life; but a leſſon which few have learned; and none leſs than *theſe*, who proclaim themſelves *maſters of art* in it.

It is this pleaſure-bred cloud on the underſtanding, which makes us forget, that virtue is the health of the ſoul: that all proviſion, and parade from without, can make a ſenſualiſt juſt as happy, as the ſame can make an invalid: that both have pains adhering, neceſſarily, to their preſent ſtate: that both have rather remedies, than joys: that aſſemblies, balls, maſquerades, *&c.* are but as well-ſtored hoſpitals, unneceſſary to the ſound; and but poor palliatives to the ſick: though pretenders to more than health, they confeſs our diſtemper; and what is worſe, increaſe the diſtemper they confeſs: and that of diſtempers the worſt, a wrong judgment in our moſt important point.

I grant, that in the boundleſs field of licentiouſneſs, ſome baſtard joys may riſe, that look gay, more eſpecially at a diſtance; but they ſoon wither. No joys are always ſweet, and flouriſh long, but ſuch as have ſelf-approbation for their root, and the divine favour for their ſhelter. We are for rootleſs joys, joys beyond appetite; which is the ſole root of ſenſual delight. We are for joys, not of man's native growth, but forced up by luxurious art: dung'd by great expence; and ſhone on, not by the divine favour, but a ſtrong ima-

gination, which gives them all their little taſte; and makes them apt, like other crude fruits, to ſurfeit, and deſtroy. We are, in a word, for joys of our own creation, the ſeeds of which Heaven never ſowed in our hearts. But we may as well invade another prerogative of Heaven, and, with the tyrant of *Elis*, pretend to make thunder and lightning, as *real* joy. I ſay *real* joy; joy we may make, but not chearfulneſs. Joy may ſubſiſt without thought; chearfulneſs riſes from it. Joy is from the pulſe; chearfulneſs from the heart. That may give a momentary flaſh of pleaſure; this alone makes a happy man. And happy men there may be, who never laughed in their lives: and in a ſituation, where reaſon calls for the reverſe, there is not in nature ſo melancholy a thing as joy.

It is this intellectual cloud, which hangs, like a fog, over every gay reſort of our *moral* invalids (though inviſible to common eyes), which flings us not only into miſtakes, but contradictions. How ſick are we of yeſterday? yet how fond of to-morrow, though devoted to the ſame cheat as the paſt? Which ſtings us into contradictions not only in reaſon; but contradictions to ſenſe. We can't believe that fatigue, is fatigue; let its cauſe be what it will. Too much recreation tires as much as too much buſineſs; yet one we ſwallow; are choaked by the other. The man of buſineſs has, at leaſt, his ſeventh day's reſt. Our fever for folly never intermits. Our week has no ſabbath in it. So much harder is the maſter whom we ſerve, than that of better men; and yet, to our infamous honour be it ſpoken, we are better ſervants than they. How do we run, labour, expend; expoſe ourſelves, hurt our families, reſiſt unbounded, eternal temptations to wiſdom;

wiſdom; offer up the rich ſacrifice of conſcience, and underſtanding; watch; watch late; and all, but pray, for his ſervice? Quite jaded with protracted amuſements, we yawn over them. The dull drone of nominal diverſion ſtill humming on, when the ſhort tune of enjoyment is over, lulls us quite aſleep. Like the bear in the fable, we hug our darling to death. Inſtead of rejoicing in tribulation (of which few among us ever heard), we ſorrow in delight: for, to ſpeak the truth (though we would not have it divulged), we tread this eternal round of vanities, leſs, for the pleaſure it brings, than for the pain it ſuſpends. It is a refuge, not a prize. Like criminals (as we are), we fly to it from our much-injured, unforgiving foes, from ourſelves; which chide and ſting us, when alone; when together, we ſupport each other's ſpirits; which is like ſailors clinging to each other for ſafety, when the veſſel is ſinking. We fly from ourſelves, becauſe we firſt fly from our Maker. Wretched flight! Hell is nothing but an intire abſence from him; and every partial departure has its proportion of it.

But thoſe deep draughts of pleaſure which beſot us, muſt anſwer for all abſurdities; and, among the reſt, for our intire ignorance of the nature of that world in which we live. Mirth at a funeral is ſcarce more indecent and unnatural, than a perpetual flight of gaiety, and burſt of exultation, in a world like this: a world which may ſeem a paradiſe to fools, but is an hoſpital with the wiſe: a world, in which bare eſcape is a prime felicity. *Effugere eſt triumphus.*

The numberleſs pains of body, and mind; the dark ſolemn approaches to, or diſmal veſtibules of, the grave,

as well as opening graves themſelves, are ſo thick ſcattered over the face of the whole earth, that an unpetrified heart can't look round, without feeling an inevitable damp, and general diſconſolation; and venting a ſigh univerſal for the whole family of *Adam*, for the lot of all mankind. Nothing but ſtrong faith in eternal life could hinder tears from burſting o'er it: nor are tears too much; for ſympathy is the chief duty of human life.

Were one tenth part of the wretchedneſs *ſeen*, that is *felt*, it would ſtrike us with horror. Heaven means to make one half of the ſpecies a moral lecture to the other. It ſurrounds us with deplorable objects, not more for the ſake of the wretched, than for our own; that our compaſſion awaken'd, may awaken our prudence; and teach us what we have *to do*, by ſhewing us what we have *to fear*. Shall the rich, and the well educated, throw their abundance down the ſink of unprofitable and untaſted delights, while untaught multitudes miſtake, and ſin; and indigent multitudes ſhiver, and ſtarve? While we think we are ſparing expences, we are running in debt. How deep are we in arrears to the diſtreſſed? The diſtreſſed have, from reaſon, as juſt a demand on our ſuperfluities, as we have from law, on our ſtewards for our eſtates. But this is no *play-debt*, and therefore, without diſhonour, undiſcharged.

Is then my repeated cenſure of intellectual darkneſs too ſevere? I wiſh it were. But, alas! how diſtant from their thoughts are the points the moſt important? How foreign to their intereſt, all that is neareſt their hearts? When I ſpeak of their darkneſs, I do not forget

get my own. There is not that man on earth that does not well deſerve cenſure, and even from them. But there is difference in deviation from the right. *Mulattos* are not *Ethiopians*. I grant in their excuſe, that, though all can ſee folly in pleaſures paſt, yet muſt he be wiſer than *Solomon*, who ſees it in thoſe to come. Yet wiſer than *Solomon*, in this reſpect, *muſt* we be, or continue mere idiots; and idiots with regard to the *preſent* life: for this life's enjoyment lies, chiefly, in our title to the joys of the next; as earth becomes fruitful from the kind influence of the diſtant ſun.

And now what occaſion of advancing any thing more to the condemnation of theſe ſons of *Epicurus*, and in diſfavour of pleaſure, than this, *viz.* That by darkening our underſtandings, it robs us of *this* world; and by ſtupifying our conſciences, of the *next*. So far are they from their boaſted happineſs, that even in the judgment of a Heathen (not to mention the Scripture, of much leſs authority with them), they are dead while yet alive. *Is demum* VIVERE, *atque anima frui videtur; qui alicui intentus negotio, aut artis bonæ, aut præclari facinoris, famam quærit.* Salluſt.

It is ſaid of their maſter Epicurus, *Deos verbis reliquit, re ſuſtulit.* By his, and their, goddeſs, *Pleaſure*, they do juſt the ſame. They loudly boaſt, and effectually deſtroy, it; the firſt, through want of modeſty; the laſt through want of underſtanding. But they muſt keep themſelves in countenance, though out of heart; and make themſelves ſome *ſmall* amends from vanity, for what is wanting to reaſon, and to ſenſe.

Nor tread they their Maſter's ſteps in this alone.

He out of a ſwarm of dancing atoms, was for making a world: They, out of a giddy whirl of innumerable amuſements, thoſe minute particles of pleaſure, are for forming happineſs: A ſyſtem equally philoſophical; and of equal ſucceſs. A GOD alone can make one; the god-like only can atchieve the other: And where are they to be found in this hopeful ſchool?

The *one thing neceſſary* for happineſs is in common to both worlds; this, and the next. In vain we ſeek a different receipt for it, one in time, another in eternity. *Virtue* wanting, every thing elſe becomes neceſſary to happineſs, and ineffectual. To what amounts, then, the boaſt of their numberleſs felicities? It brings, in proof of their happineſs, a demonſtration of their miſery. *A good man ſhall be ſatisfied from himſelf* alone. A bad man ſhall be diſſatisfied, with all the world at his devotion.

But there is a third particular, in which, if they had followed their Maſter, it would have been more for their advantage, and credit. An indulgent Providence has abundantly provided us with irreproveable pleaſures; why are theſe ſwept away with an ungrateful hand, to make room for poiſons, of our own deadly compoſition, to be placed in their ſtead? *Epicurus* was in love with his gardens. But that is an amour too innocent for *them:* A garden has ever had the praiſe, and affection of the wiſe. What is requiſite to make a wiſe, and happy man, but reflection, and peace? and both are the natural growth of a garden. Nor is a garden only a promoter of a good man's happineſs, but a picture of it; and, in ſome ſort, ſhews him to himſelf. Its culture, order, fruitfulneſs, and

ſecluſion

ſecluſion from the world, compared to the weeds, wildneſs, and expoſure of a common field, is no bad emblem of a good man, compared to the multitude. A garden weeds the mind; it weeds it of worldly thoughts; and ſows celeſtial ſeed in their ſtead. For what ſee we there, but what awakens in us our gratitude to heaven? A garden to the virtuous is a paradiſe ſtill extant; a paradiſe unloſt. What a rich preſent from heaven of ſweet incenſe to man was wafted in that breeze? What a delightful entertainment of ſight glows on yonder bed, as if in kindly ſhowers the watry bow had ſhed all its moſt celeſtial colours on it? Here are no objects that fire the paſſions: None that do not inſtruct the underſtanding, and better the heart, while they delight the ſenſe; but not the ſenſe of *theſe* men. To them the tulip has no colours; the roſe no ſcent: Their palate for Pleaſure is ſo deadened, and burnt out, by the violent ſtroke of higher taſtes, as leaves no ſenſibility for the ſofter impreſſions of theſe; much leſs for the reliſh of thoſe philoſophic, or moral, ſentiments, which the verdant walk, clear ſtream, embowering ſhade, pendant fruit, or riſing flower, thoſe ſpeechleſs, not powerleſs, orators, ever praiſing their great Author, inſpire: Much leſs ſtill for their religious inſpiration. Who cannot look on a flower till he frightens himſelf out of infidelity? Religion is the natural growth of the works of God; and infidelity, of the inventions of men.

Spiritually blind, deaf, and ſtupid, they ſee not the great *Omnipreſent* walking in the garden; they hear not his call; they know not that they are naked; they hide not among the trees; but ſtand in open defiance of his laws. *Religion* is far from them.

And where can we hope religion, if not in *age?* And are there *Hecubas* to be found among the bright *Helens* of our times? Is diverſion grown a leveller, like death? Can aſſemblies baniſh diſtinction, and ſhew us all dates, like church-yards? The latter, for *their* years, is the more proper ſcene. Give me leave, Sir, to addreſs them; and addreſs them in haſte: They may die by to-morrow. To-night they are ſhining at the aſſembly. Thither, for a moment, imagination tranſports me to attend them.

"So various, Ladies! and cogent, are the reaſons "which might call you to this place, that I am at a "loſs which to thank for the honour it receives. "Come you to admire, or to be admired? Your mo- "deſty declines the laſt. Come you out of kindneſs, "then, to authoriſe thoſe amuſements, you chuſe "not to adorn? Or come you, out of compaſſion, to "make theſe young criminals appear more innocent, "than they could appear uncompared with ſuperior "indiſcretion? Or come you out of piety, to return "thanks at this *religious houſe*, for your ſo narrowly "eſcaping the grave? Or come you, out of pure ge- "neroſity, to heighten the mirth of the night? Your "point is carried. What borrowed ornaments are "theſe? Is vanity ſtill in its ſpring? Is the folly of "hairleſs heads putting forth its gay bloſſoms in the "December of life? Age cannot drop its dignity, "and yet retain its privileges. It muſt be laughed "at, if it will not be revered; and objects of reve- "rence cannot enter at *theſe* doors. We reverence "age, as we reverence noble birth; on ſuppoſition, "both: If our ſuppoſition proves falſe, our homage "dies.

"A

"A little entertainment, you ſay, is natural—
"What a portentous jumble of ſeaſons, what a vio-
"lation of nature is this; winter dancing with the
"ſpring? Where are the firſt partakers of your pa-
"ſtimes, when paſtimes became you? Their very mo-
"numents are in ruins. What real connexion of
"heart, or intereſts, can you have with any now a-
"live? And without ſuch connection, how inſipid
"your commerce with them? Sure you cannot ap-
"prove *Mezentius*'s connection of the living with the
"dead.

Hang your hours, though, probably, ſo few, ſo
"*very* heavy on your hands, that you had rather bear
"contempt than them? Is it drowned by the ſpright-
"ly viol, or hear you yon ſolemn bell? Wants that
"the power to call you to your cloſets, which calls
"your grand-children to their graves? Is it thus
"you diſcharge the duties of age to the riſing gene-
"ration? Whatever ſeeds of prudence you would ſow
"in their hearts, before they can take root, theſe va-
"nities blow away; eſpecially, if you, like the ladies
"of Lapland, heighten the * *hurricane* yourſelves.

"Have you never heard, my good Ladies, of the
"redemption of time? You carry yours to market,
"and ſell it for nothing, nay, you dearly buy it off
"your hands. Can nothing but ſuch trifles, ſuch
"murder of time, make you think that you are alive?
"Can nothing but the ſtroke of death convince you,
"you ſhall die? To their beauty alone, too much a-
"muſement is forgiven, even in the young. What,
"then, have *you* to plead!—That which is fairer
"than beauty, if you will call it to your aid: Virtue
"can

* Some aſſemblies ſo called.

" can reconcile our reſpect to wrinkles. It can ren-
" der age amiable, when bloom ſmiles in vain. But
" vice, and deformity, when twiſted together, is ſuch
" a *Gorgon*, as turns the tendereſt heart into ſtone.

" Pardon, Ladies! that I preſume to call that vice,
" which you will ſoften by ſome milder name. What
" is innocence in youth, may be vice in years. Be-
" ſides, mark the miſchief of what you call harmleſs
" expedients to ſmooth the rugged path of life. You
" ſpread that path with ſnares, to the ruin of thoſe
" you love. You make *parental authority*, that natu-
" ral ſafeguard of youth, their temptation to folly;
" and *filial obedience*, ſo lovely, ſo pious, the ſtrange
" cauſe of their crimes. Through ſuch mazes of
" more than folly, when parents lead the way; chil-
" dren, out of pure duty, may tread their wrong
" ſteps. Or, if they have more diſcernment, or more
" grace; what follows!—What you yourſelves will
" be ſhocked to hear; and I to tell: A daughter
" *bluſhing* for her who bore her. Which to my know-
" ledge, and aſtoniſhment, has been the too memora-
" ble, and too deplorable, caſe."

Here I would fain leave off, and throw a mantle over the nakedneſs of our own ſex: But that would be too great partiality. It is too ſure *Adam* alſo fell. As I have ſpoken to his daughters, I muſt ſpeak, Sir, by your permiſſion, now to his *aged* ſons. I can ſpeak with more freedom to theſe! I was forced to ſpare his daughters, out of decency.

" Ye firſt on roll for Eternity! why this waſte of
" time? Why is its date quite eraſed? Your ſpruce ap-
" pearance

" pearance is a perfect forgery. And deserves it not
" the wonted penalty for it? You, for whom it is al-
" most as unnatural, as for a mole, to be seen above-
" ground, what mean you by trespassing on this nether
" world? Or if here, ye deserters from death! to
" whose corps you belong, why list into so very fo-
" reign a service? Death, the more he is forgot, the
" more formidable he grows. But how could you
" forget him, who have seen him snatching from
" your bosom such numbers of your friends? Has he
" so often knocked at the next door, and so frequent-
" ly shook his lance in vain? Will you drop into the
" grave on your road to the ball? You, who, *one* full
" age of man expired, commence, a *new*, with all
" the wantonness of youth, by an antichristian rege-
" neration; a *second* birth into all the foibles of a sen-
" sual life! Consider, what tender reverence, what
" respect mixt with compassion, is paid to years own-
" ing their infirmities, and supporting them, as they
" ought. But infirmities of body dissembled, that
" those of the mind may be the more indulged; a vi-
" cious mind stinging on a jaded body into shame;
" this calls not only for the scorn, but detestation, of
" mankind.

" Consider, Sirs! is there not some mistake? Do
" not your minds, through disorder of the machine,
" go too slow, and misrepresent the time of day?
" Else, how could men, who have not space sufficient
" left between them, and their graves, for life's
" wonted delusions to display their gay phantoms;
" who can hardly hope to repeat to-morrow the farce
" of to-day; still persist to be boys? Young men, in-
" deed, may see visions of what never shall come to
" pass;

" paſs; and be raviſhed with them: But old men in " their ſenſes, cannot ſo much as dream dreams of " delight; ſuch delight, I mean, as yours. What " delight can theſe gay ſcenes afford you? I ſhould " think you ſhould be more mortified, than amuſed, " where you ſcarce can ſee a face that does not make " you look twenty years older than before. Hope " you any regard, or affection among them? No; de- " ſpair even of toleration, but when theſe *moderns*, " for amuſement, dip into you, as into chronological " tables, to know what happened before the flood: " Find friends in coevals, or deſpair.

" Indeed, my good friends, in *one* ſenſe, moſt cer- " tainly, you are ſtrangers upon earth, why will you " not be ſo in the *beſt?* That you *might* be ſo in the " beſt is, probably, the ſole reaſon you are ſtill alive. " Men in years, and the clergy, are the two natural " ſupports of virtue and religion; that is, the two co- " lumns on which public welfare is built: And the " firſt is the ſtronger, as there is leſs prejudice againſt " it. They both have higher obligations to be wiſe " than other men: And if the world ſees thoſe high- " er obligations fail of their due effect, their con- " ſciences will ſit eaſier under the neglect of their " own. The clergy are voluntiers; the aged are " preſſed by nature into the ſervice of wiſdom: And " if they both deſert, vice may triumph without a " battle: and virtue fall without a mourner.

" Ye fine men of rank, and parts! a common ſol- " dier (your contempt, no doubt) ſhall reproach you. " One of them, requeſting diſmiſſion from CHARLES " Vth, gave this reaſon for it, *Inter vitæ negotia extre-*

" *munque*

" *munque diem oportet aliquod temporis intercedere.*
" Much more *inter vitæ voluptates*, and our laſt hour.
" Will you go to your graves with your eyes ſhut, as
" *Plutarch* tells you the Spartans went to their beds
" in the dark? If ſo, as reaſonable men in years en-
" ter their graves as a harbour, you will ſtrike on
" yours, as on a rock. You do not only expoſe your-
" ſelves, but your whole ſpecies. When they that
" have moſt reaſon to be wiſe, are the fartheſt from
" it; it ſinks the dignity of our common nature,
" brings, beyond all other enormities, a reproach on
" mankind; and gives each individual, as a ſufferer,
" as a ſharer in the ſcandal, a juſt right not only of
" cenſure, but revenge.

" This will excuſe my indignation at two *notorious*
" offenders; and therefore I ſhall dare name them.
" Who are they, but *Sedbury* and *Torriſmond?* Their
" pictures have been partly drawn by the famous
" *Seymour:* I ſhall ſketch the reſt. Theſe are two
" perfect heroes in this tranſgreſſion; old offenders
" in an offence, which, till old, they could not be-
" gin: Who join the gallantries of *Paris* to the years
" of *Neſtor:* Who read a play-bill, and a bill of mor-
" tality, with the ſame ſenſation, and aſpect; Who
" can *amuſe* themſelves with a cathedral ſervice: and
" go for an hour's *diverſion* to the funeral of a friend!

" How many friends have they loſt? that is, how
" often has their confidence in the world been ſha
" ken at the root? And give they ſtill full proof of
" their obſtinate adherence to, and cordial incorpora-
" tion with it? Has it not daily crumbled away in
" their fingers? and will they hug it ſtill? How can

" their

" their hearts ſtill ſwell with thoſe flattened bubbles
" of idle joy, ſo often pricked by death?

" Ye two antediluvian youths! what greater folly
" on earth than that of confounding ſeaſons, and not
" giving their reſpective appropriations to the differ-
" ent periods of life? Nothing can be in credit that
" is out of character; and credit you affect, no one
" more. If you would find it, let theſe gentle hints,
" like the light touch of a magic wand, make you
" ſhrink from your vernal bloom; and wither at leaſt
" to the decencies of fourſcore: for I would make
" you *ſome* allowance ſtill.

" Know ye not, that they who in their wrinkled
" decline out-dive in folly the temerities of youth,
" and die immaturely at twice the age of man, are
" void of ſhame from cenſure human, and divine;
" quite callous to God, and men? Know you not that
" ſuch faults after ſeventy are as ſeverely judged by
" this world, as the next? To be born like a wild
" aſs's colt, is natural; but not to live ſo, and retain
" the colt's tooth, when all the man's are fallen out:
" Time was, when to centaurize was leſs ridiculous.
" But unleſs your equeſtrian part is now diſmiſſed,
" laughter is irreſiſtible; as your friend *Horace* aſſures
" you:

Solve ſeneſcentem mature ſanus equum, *ne*
Peccet ad extremum ridendus.

" Inſtead of ſurfeiting every public place with your
" ungodly omnipreſence, you ſhould be reſerved as
" the great Mogul. A little ſelf-annihilation would

" be

" be the wiſeſt way even for your own vanity; for " the more we forget our age, the more we remind o- " thers of it; and the younger we would appear, ſo " much older ſhall we look, in all eyes but our own.

" Yes, gentlemen! to preſerve your dignity, retire " like eaſtern kings. And kings, indeed, you may " be, and glorious ones too, if you will be wiſe: For " „ wiſdom is the *crown* of old age; and the fear of " „ the Lord is its *glory*."

Since the witchcraft of *Pleaſure* is ſo ſtrong as to turn young men into old, by their infirmities; and old into young, by their affectation, and conceit; let us look a little more narrowly into the perverſe compoſition of that marvellous being, which we ſtyle a *Man of pleaſure*; and make ſomewhat, if poſſible, like an analyſis of it.

The man of Pleaſure (though I fear he never aſked himſelf the queſtion) of what nature, ſpecies, or rank in the creation conceives he himſelf to be? Does this yet unconſtrued, undecyphered creature conſider himſelf as an *immortal* being? or only as a *rational?* or as a mere *animal?* If as an immortal, let him regard things eternal: If as a rational, let reaſon reign: If as a mere animal, let him indulge appetite; but not go beyond it. When appetite is ſatisfied, an animal's meal is over: If as a compoſition of all three; let it not be a confuſion of them; let it be a *compoſition*; and order alone can preſerve that name.

No; he is for neither of theſe. He is an immortal, without a ſenſe of immortality. He is a rational, dethroning

dethroning reaſon; and an animal, tranſgreſſing appetite: An unhappy combination, a wretched chaos of all, without the benefit of either: Nay, a ſufferer from each, becauſe an abuſer of all. They are not, as heaven deſigned them, three parties in alliance for his happineſs: but three conſpirators, of his own making, againſt his peace.

For mark this immortal maze of human ruin; appetite, reaſon, and immortality, violate, and are violated by, each other. Subtle reaſon finds arts, and arguments to tempt appetite beyond her bounds. Unbounded appetite with ſtupifying ſenſuality bribes reaſon to drop her dominion. Her dominion dropped renders blind immortality regardleſs of things eternal; And they being diſregarded, all immortality's boundleſs powers, and deſires, devolve on things temporal; and devolved on them, with violence impel depoſed reaſon, and riotous appetite, to monſtrous lengths of extravagance, which had otherwiſe lain quite beyond both their power and deſire.

Thus ſtands the perplexed, and hitherto not unravelled caſe. The man, in his conſtitution, debauches the brute: The brute debauched, dethrones the man: the dethroned man, and debauched brute, join in rebellion againſt the immortal: The ſubdued immortal reſigns to them its infinite powers and deſires: which they exert to the deſtruction abſolute of all three.

The man, if not in alliance with an immortal, never would have had an unbounded power and deſire. If not in alliance with a brute, he never would have debaſed

debaſed them to mean, and ſordid ends; never would have confined them to things below: But being joined to both, and, through perverſeneſs, and ſtupidity, rendering celeſtial immortality inglorious, and terreſtrial brutality more brutal, he creates a far more miſerable being than either of them apart could poſſibly have been. We may therefore congratulate the *mere* brute on his high prerogative of being incapable of becoming ſuch a monſter of rationality as this. And *The Man of Pleaſure*, if modeſt, will, for the future, give the wall to his horſe. He, like *Codrus*, diſguiſes himſelf, puts off his dignity to ruſh into danger; and happy for him, if he meets with nothing worſe than death.

Reaſon, and immortality, the *man*, and the *immortal*, theſe only occaſion the calamity; and the poor *animal*, an innocent ally, muſt ſuffer with them.

If your ſiſter's favourites will contemplate themſelves in any glaſs but their own, let them look in this *true* mirror; and though the features are ſomewhat monſtrous, let them not diſown them; ſince they may change them when they pleaſe; and they are pictured ſo minutely, that they may be the more inclined ſo to do. For what a hideous ruin of humanity is this? The world after the deluge, a leſs melancholy ſight. Such ſhocking footſteps ſin leaves behind it, in nature animate, and inanimate. Reaſon, and virtue, are the ſole beauty, and ſole ſalvation of all. Through all her realms creation groans without it. The Deity is all reaſon in his nature, conduct, and commands. The great, invariable, eternal, alternative, throughout his creation, is, or reaſon,

or

or ruin. To how many ears in this happy metropolis is this diſmal news?

I was going to ſay, that reaſon is the ſole baſis of happineſs; but it is not. There are three kinds of happineſs on earth, gradually leſs, and leſs. There is a happineſs from the exertion of reaſon, where reaſon is given: This is the happineſs of a *man*. There is an inferior happineſs from the gratification of ſenſe, where reaſon is denied: This is the happineſs of a *brute*. And there is a calamitous happineſs where reaſon is ſuppreſſed, or abuſed: And this is the happineſs of a *wretch*. You ſee then in what line of happineſs our *fine men* muſt be content to rank.

I know your ſiſter will call my analyſis above, a labyrinth of ſophiſtry. I will therefore give *The Man of Pleaſure*'s character in a manner leſs perplexed, and which ſhe may probably cenſure as too plain; and may wiſh a clue were wanting to find the meaning.

He is one, who, deſirous of being more happy than any man *can* be, is leſs happy than moſt men *are*.

One, who ſeeks happineſs every where, but where it is to be found.

One, who out-toils the labourer, not only without his wages, but paying dearly for it.

He is an immortal being, that has but two marks of a man about him, upright ſtature, and the power of playing the fool, which a monkey has not.

He

He is an immortal being, that triumphs in this ſingle, deplorable, and yet *falſe* hope, that he ſhall be as happy as a monkey when they are both dead; though he deſpairs of being ſo, while yet alive.

He is an immortal being, that would loſe none of its *moſt* darling delights, if he were a brute in the mire; but would loſe them all intirely, if he were an angel in heaven.

It is certain, therefore, that he deſires not to be there: And if he not ſo much as *deſires* it now, how can he ever *hope* it, when his day of diſſipation is over? And if no hope—what is our Man of Pleaſure? A man of diſtraction, and deſpair, to-morrow.

And who would buy to-day ſo dear, if it were ſo to be bought? as certainly it is not. Doubtleſs the *true* Man of Pleaſure is he, who preſerves order in his compounded nature; and gives the animal, rational, and immortal, their reſpective dues. Who, as *immortal*, places in the ſupreme Being his ſupreme delight; and, as *rational*, ſhunning ſuperſtitious auſterities; and, as *animal*, too great indulgencies; admits of all ſecular enjoyments that are ſtrictly conſiſtent with his *ſupreme*. The *true*, and *falſe*, Man of Pleaſure, are brothers; born of the ſame parent, *viz.* an inextinguiſhable love of delight: But ſo ſuperior is one to the other, that like the fabled brothers *Caſtor* and *Pollux*, one may be ſaid to be in heaven, the other on earth.

To be more explicit, I would gather three particu-

lar

lar branches from this general root of happineſs, and preſent them to your ſiſter, as a ſpecimen of the reſt.

There is no man of Pleaſure without his Eve; no Eve without her ſerpent; no ſerpent without its ſting. He that knows not the pure delight, and ever-growing tenderneſs of a chaſte love, knows not the moſt that the faireſt can beſtow.

He that knows not the ſound cordiality, and conſtant warmth of a diſintereſted friendſhip, knows not the moſt that man can enjoy from man.

He that keeps not open a conſtant intercourſe with heaven by frequent fervours of rational devotion, knows not a joy ſtill ſublimer than both.

What are the joys of vice, compared to theſe? What think their deluded admirers of a magnanimous triumph over ſtrong temptation; of a ſweet repoſe in divine favour and protection; of an indefeaſible right to life eternal? Is there not a certain grandeur, and ſolidity of happineſs in this? Is not this better than ranging from the gaming-houſe to brothels; and with other little, fluttering, gilded, noxious, liquoriſh, inſects, to be fixing on every nuiſance from delight? Sons of *Beelzebub* the god of flies. I like not a certain, modeſt faintheartedneſs in the friends, and advocates of what is right. A Chriſtian ſhould let all ſee what an animation there is in Chriſtianity above all that the world may admire beſides. Chriſtianity ſhould be the boaſt, as well as the comfort, of our hearts.

And

And now if we enquire after the cauſe which has brought us into that fool's paradiſe, on which I have dwelt ſo long, we ſhall ſee with what good reaſon *Pleaſure*, and *Infidelity*, are joined together in my plan.

The Scripture aſcribes the conqueſt of the world, that is, of its Pleaſure, to *faith*; and is very copious in enumerating renowned inſtances of it. Were faith as prevalent in us, we too ſhould prove *Alexanders* in the moral world. All agree, that ſeveral goods being propoſed for our *ultimate* enjoyment, it is impoſſible in our *nature* not to chuſe the *beſt*. All agree, that God's promiſes are better than any thing we can carve for ourſelves. And all agree, that they are inconſiſtent with ſin. So that he who will take out his portion in this life, *muſt* loſe it in the next. What then, againſt our *nature*, and againſt our *reaſon*, hinders us from proſecuting our *chiefeſt good*?—Want of *faith*. All is reſolvable into that alone.

For inſtance. Our temptations are of two kinds. From things that *grieve*, or things that *pleaſe*; the former *fright*, the latter *allure* us, from our virtue. From poverty, pain, diſgrace, or proſecution, we fly to falſehood, or fraud, for eſcape. But thoſe ills are not the immediate cauſe of it; but want of *faith* in God's promiſes that, "He will ſuccour us in *thoſe* "exigencies; and deliver us in his good time; and "make all things work together for our good." On the other hand, when Pleaſure intices, and carries its point; we do not think thoſe Pleaſures, be they what they will, preferable to heaven. But heaven is at a diſtance, and the ſoul is eager for *preſent* good. But

why is heaven at a diſtance? for want of faith; for faith is "the *ſubſtance* of things hoped for; and the "*evidence* of things not ſeen." It antedates the exiſtence of that which is future; makes "our conver-"ſation in heaven, though we are ſtill in the body; "aſſociates us with angels, though in our ſolitude; "and gives us greater joy in contemplation, than the "world can give in hand." This is true, or the conduct of thoſe heroes in Scripture had been impracticable! and they, like ourſelves, were mere men. Thus *Infidelity* leads to *Pleaſure*; and *Pleaſure* confirms *Infidelity*; and both together conſummate ruin.

Theſe gentlemen ſeem to think that the world was made in jeſt; that there is nothing of moment, or ſerious in it. There is nothing elſe. There is not a fly, but has had infinite wiſdom concerned, not only in its ſtructure, but in its deſtination. And was man made only to flutter, ſing, and expire? A mere expletive in the mighty work, the marvellous operations of the Almighty? Is joy *their* point? He that to the beſt of his power has ſecured the *final ſtake* has a *fons perennis* of joy within him. He is *ſatisfied from himſelf*. They, his reverſe, borrow all from *without*. Joy wholly from without, is falſe, precarious, and ſhort. From without it may be gathered; but, like gathered flowers, though fair, and ſweet for a ſeaſon, it muſt ſoon wither, and become offenſive. Joy from *within*, is like ſmelling the roſe on the tree; it is more ſweet and fair; it is laſting; and, I muſt add, immortal.

As, therefore, I have above offered theſe gentlemen three expedients for happineſs; to perſuade their acceptance of them, I ſhall now give three ſhort maxims,

ſims, which will ſit light on their memories, and (I hope) in time, eaſy on their hearts.

He that will not *fear*, ſhall *feel* the wrath of heaven.

He that lives in the kingdom of *ſenſe*, ſhall die into the kingdom of *ſorrow*.

He ſhall never truly enjoy his *preſent* hour, who never thinks on his *laſt*.

Let your ſiſter, dear Sir, tell her *grey* pretty fellows, who are apoſtles to theſe *Gentiles*, that, if they can advance three maxims of greater truth; or three expedients of greater efficacy to happineſs, than thoſe above-mentioned; I am their convert, I exchange my Bible for Bolingbroke; and prepare for the Ball: For N. B. I am but fourſcore.

With beſt wiſhes to you, and thoſe you love, that is, all mankind; I am,

Dear Sir,

Moſt affectionately,

Yours.

LETTER III.

ON

PLEASURE.

In ANSWER to One received.

DEAR SIR,

THE contents of your letter damp my joy in hearing from you. Even a good man's approaching death ſtrikes us with *ſome* concern. I am ſorry that the ſting, which *Pleaſure* left in your unhappy friend, occaſions ſo ſwift a decline. How naturally we lay hold on heaven when the world ſinks under us, and will ſupport our hopes no more! The piece of devotion which you deſire, you ſhall receive in my next. I cannot reflect on your friend's diſtreſs, and a noble youth whom I myſelf attended in his extremes, without dwelling ſtill longer on *Pleaſure*, which has coſt the world ſo dear.

If diſeaſe, and infirmity, make us daily viſits in the perſons of our neighbours, and friends; and death, by the ſame affecting meſſengers, gives us frequent notice that he will be with us ſoon:

If,

If, when death arrives, all mankind, however divided before, unanimouſly cloſe in one opinion, and one wiſh:

If libertine enjoyments haſten the approach, and heighten the dread, and imbitter the conſequences, of death:

If death is the ſingle event ſure, and virtue the ſingle purſuit indefeaſible; and the Divine Favour the ſingle point of abſolute importance:

If that favour comes ſo cheap, that the very leavings (in time, care, and expence) of our *real* enjoyments, would go a great way in the purchaſe of it:

If the martyr's blood makes that purchaſe ſure: and it is impoſſible that *martyrdom*, and *voluptuouſneſs*, ſhould ſhare the ſame fate:

If the fate to be ſhared is endleſs; and this life but as a moment to an age; and an age not a moment to eternity; and eternity as much ours, as the preſent hour:

If he, that is over-fond of the *preſent*, or high in expectation from any *future*, hour, either knows not *this* world; or believes not in the *next*:

If all this is true; that is, if it is day at noon; how happy, like your friend *Euſebius*, to ſtrike early into the right path; and not ſo long to ſlumber in indulgence, like the noble youth (of whom I ſhall ſoon

ſpeak), as to ſuffer the birth-day of our underſtanding to be the laſt day of our lives?

I told you, in a former letter, that I would give you your friend *Euſebius*'s character at large: not, to be ſure, for your information; but to place him in oppoſition to the *Men of Pleaſure:* And ſo,

Facem præferre pudendis. JUV.

that their deformity may be ſet in a ſtronger light, for the benefit of thoſe weak eyes, who cannot ſee a mountain without ſpectacles; with whom a *Centaur* paſſes for a man. Or, rather, who think a Man of Pleaſure an extremely happy creature, and, with ancient aſtronomers, place the *Centaur* in heaven. Their *Sagittarius* there, or eternal hunter, ever aiming at *Pleaſure*, and ever miſſing his mark. How very much, the character of *Euſebius* will plainly ſhew.

Men of Pleaſure, notwithſtanding all the thorns they meet with in their flowery path, imagine all would enter it, but for want of taſte, or ſpirit, or purſe: *Euſebius* wants none of theſe. He wants not a taſte for aught that can gratify either imagination or ſenſe; that can make a coxcomb or debauché; but he is neither. Nor wants he a purſe, or heart, to provide thoſe gratifications. His purſe is large; larger his heart; but not corrupt, and nobly *wrong*. He is young, gay, rich, expenſive. So far he is with them; but will leave them ſoon, as the ſun ſlides from under an eclipſe. *His* riches widen the circle of his virtues. *Their* riches increaſe the number of their crimes. There are two kinds of expence: in both, riches

riches make themſelves wings, and fly away. But widely different in their flight: in one they fly away as an eagle towards heaven: in their flight beautiful, and celeſtial in their end. In the other, they fly away as an owl to the deſart: ungracious and ill-omen'd, in their flight, and ending in the deſart of ignominy, and ruin.

Euſebius, though liberal to the demands of nature, rank, and duty; ſtarves vice, caprice, and folly. Theſe (the great cormorants of gold), he ſends begging to *their* doors; they, as old intimates, welcome and embrace them all. And if they have not thrice the fortune of *Euſebius*, muſt ſoon be beggars themſelves. While he, with one half *they* ſink in a debauch, lifts beggars (beggars, I mean from fortune, not from folly) into the real comforts of life.

He too has his *amuſements*; but not ſuch as deaden, but revive: ſuch as recover the relaxed tone of application; re-animate to new effort; and thus are eſſential, though pauſing, parts of noble, well-judging *induſtry*. He ſtarts not at a maſquerade: nor thinks cards the books of the devil. But thinks all our diverſions like long books, that were better epitomized; or, like the books of the *Sybil*, which, as they were leſſened in number, roſe in their price.

He, as well as they, has his parks, gardens, grottos, caſcades, ſtatues, paintings, *&c.* but enjoys them more. Not becauſe his are better than theirs, but becauſe he is better than they. His paintings have beauties unborrowed from the pencil; and his ſtatues in *his* eyes appear, like *Pygmalion's*, to live; though

mere marble in *theirs*. His all-animating joy within gives grace to art, and ſmiles to nature, inviſible to common eyes. Objects of ſenſe, and imagination, for the greater power of pleaſing, are indebted to the goodneſs of his heart. For as the ſun is itſelf the moſt glorious of objects, and makes all others ſhine, ſo virtue itſelf is the greateſt of pleaſures, and of all other pleaſures redoubles the delight.

He, and they, though they both value riches, yet entertain widely different opinions about them. He conſiders a great fortune, as his being put, by a kind providence, into his honourable commiſſion for doing much good. They conſider it as a privilege, or at leaſt as an excuſe, for the contrary. He ſurveying his ample arcades, and lofty domes, rejoices more in what benefits others, than whataggrandizes himſelf: rejoices more in conſidering how many mouths he has fed, than in conſidering how many eyes he has drawn. He triumphs in reflecting to what numbers he has been enabled, by the divine indulgence, to turn, without a miracle, thoſe ſtones into bread. They, from their huge Babel-like buildings, contract a Babel-like pride, which turns, with regard to thoſe beneath them, their hearts into ſtone. Such men, in effect, build *downward*, are the more ignoble, that is the lower, for their height.

He thinks, that heaven's rich donations imply in them ſome transfer to the public: *they* think they imply a transfer of the public homage to themſelves. Inſtead of imagining his grandeur to be a demand on the public for its homage, he looks on it as the public's demand on him for bounty, and patronage, of which

which he has erected ſuch proud promiſes; and by them raiſed ſo juſt an expectation. He thinks, that their riches (how ſtrangely ſoever it may ſound) run them in debt; and that not to *benefit*, is, to *defraud*.

His humility is equal to his magnificence; and as magnificence with humility ſpeaks more regard for others, than himſelf, it eſcapes envy, and enſures general applauſe. *Their* pride defeats their magnificence, and robs it of that applauſe which is its ſingle aim: For it is a great authority which tells us, *That "pride is a tree which eats up its own fruit."*

He knows (what *they* conſider not), that ſplendid ſuperiorities cannot be *neutral*, with regard to the characters of thoſe who poſſeſs them; that, therefore, men poſſeſs them at their peril; that they muſt degrade, if they do not exalt them. That heaven, which in ſpight of different ranks, levels happineſs, deſigned it as the peculiar curſe of the great (if they deſerve it) to be leſſened by grandeur, and illuſtriouſly diſgraced. That, if *apes*, and *crocodiles*, men hurtful, or ridiculous, inhabit ſuperb piles, they muſt deſpair of being worſhipped: though, but through vain and keen appetite for public incenſe, they never had been built.

You ſee in how many points theſe men fall ſhort of *Euſebius* in Pleaſure from *expence*; which, notwithſtanding, is an article on which they pique themſelves not a little. And give me leave to ſubjoin one more particular, which will affect them leſs than the former, though it ought to affect them moſt of all; *his* wealth has ſubterranean channels; bleſſes unſeen; and coſts the relieved neither bluſhes, nor thanks.

Not one priſon have *they* opened; not one tear have *they* dried; which might ſpeak in their favour, when their *own* begin to flow. The ſorrows we have relieved are the ſureſt ſupport in our own. The beſt that can be ſaid of *their* expences, is, that they are an unwilling encomium on thoſe of your friend.

Senſual, of all our pleaſures are the meaneſt; how low muſt a ſoul celeſtial ſtoop for them! Yet theſe our thirſty ſpunges of ſenſuality, who ſuck up every drop of it, in or *out* of, their way, though they take up the dirt with it, prefer to all the reſt. And in theſe, if in any, they will venture to diſpute his ſuperiority. But, for reaſons, ſome already mentioned; more, moſt obvious: he is their ſuperior in theſe. In pleaſures *intellectual*, how far are they behind him! and then the *moral*, they are all his own. It is one of their minute, and meagre pleaſures, profeſſedly to decline them: And theſe are the *ſupreme*. Moral pleaſures, though faintly (in this imperfect ſtate), yet truly taſte of heaven; and, what is more, inſure that heaven of which they taſte. And what an ineſtimable ſuperiority is this! He that can think of death undiſmay'd,

Extremumque diem vitæ inter munera ponit. LU.

has more enjoyment, even in diſtreſs, than they in triumph, with every vain amuſement turning reaſon out of doors, leſt it ſhould wound them with one whiſper of the grave. On how many melancholy occaſions in life ſhould we be glad of an aſylum to which to fly? How ſhould we be tranſported with a thought that had infallible comfort in it? And that thought

thought can be but one; and that one, it is the conſtant aim, labour, nay boaſt, of theſe wiſe men to deſtroy.

Euſebius's love of pleaſure is equal to theirs; whence then this vaſt inequality of happineſs? He *commands* his pleaſures; ſome he cultivates; ſome admits cautiouſly; others ſends bluſhing away. *Their* pleaſures *domineer;* ſcout them away on vileſt errands; bid them throw their patrimony in the dirt of proſtitution, or debauch; or dungeon them in midnight dens of fraud, and deſtruction; and command them to whirl it away with a loſing card, or ſtamp it to nothing with a deſperate dye. What ſcaffolds of fatal execution are thoſe guilty boards, where moments determine on fortunes for life; and rage and diſtraction threaten ruin eternal?

From this thraldom to their pleaſures, this wretched impotence of heart, it is, that while *he* has but one, and that a moſt gracious Maſter, *they* have as many tyrants as there are follies, and vices, in the world. Ten times a day they change their *Pharaoh;* and why? Becauſe his wages are ſo poor. They have it, indeed, in their power to change their maſter, but not to break their chain.

The *Romans* once pretended that they had a golden ſhield which fell from heaven: To ſecure it from theft, they laid it up among eleven others made of braſs. This expedient had been unneceſſary againſt *their* wiſdom. They run away by choice with the eleven *counterfeits;* with a multitude of falſe, ineffectual pleaſures, and leave the celeſtial, as of no value, to

men of leſs underſtanding.—Virtue, the delight of *Euſebius*, is a celeſtial ſhield againſt every evil of human life. *Their* pleaſures are rather ſwords, that *pierce them through with many ſorrows.*

The contraſt how ſtrong! Their pleaſures die in fruition, and are remembered with regret. His ſurvive the preſent actual enjoyment, and are as ſweet in retroſpect, as in hand. Theirs leſſen on repetition; his increaſe: Theirs create, and aggravate, calamities; his avert moſt, and alleviate the reſt: Theirs haſten death, and heighten its horror; his owe their perfection to his final hour, after having heightened, and lengthened, all the bleſſings of life. And what a wretch is that happineſs, and what an idiot that wiſdom, that can offer no comfort in the days of darkneſs, and the hours of death? In a word, *their* wretched joys flouriſh, like diſmal weeping willows watered by a ditch: Poor the figure they make, flux and obſcene the ground on which they ſtand: *His* flouriſh, like cedars of *Libanus*, from the fountains of heaven; and are rooted in a rock; the rock of his ſalvation.

It is this ſuperior ground on which he ſtands, which imparts that inimitable ſweetneſs of air, aſpect, and deportment, which marks him, among multitudes of the gayeſt, for the gay. *They*, like things gilt, have much to ſhew; much more to hide; are all darkneſs within. *He*, like a diamond, is tranſparent, and ſhines at heart. He looks, as if *virtue*, according to the wiſh of ſome ſages, was at laſt become viſible, and ſhone through him; in perſon, not precept, making a viſit to mankind: And man is mended by looking on him.

Now,

Now, pleaſe, Sir, to obſerve, to what an aſtoniſhing degree that intellectual darkneſs, mentioned in my former letter, prevails in theſe men, that would outſhine all the world. What is their chief boaſt? Why this, that they *make the moſt* of this life. Whereas the very fundamental difference between them, and *Euſebius*, is, That they make nothing of this world, becauſe they deſign to make their all of it. He makes much of this world, becauſe he holds it as little; becauſe ever having the ſentiments, without the terrors, of a death-bed, he never cuts off this life from the thoughts of the next; but ſees his whole exiſtence in one unbroken thread extended before him.

But, before I diſmiſs your friend *Euſebius* (though he has made you a very long viſit), I muſt take notice of one particular more. Theſe gentlemen pique themſelves on their epitome of all virtue and religion, *benevolence:* If they had it, it would confute moſt I have ſaid; and make them very happy: For it may ſtand as a general maxim, that men are happy in proportion to their good-will: Nor is it ſtrange, that to the greateſt duty, ſhould, by nature, belong the greateſt reward. But their title to this virtue is not clear. The reaſon they ſo loudly pretend to it, is, becauſe they know they have it not. The weakeſt ſide of a citadel is to be defended moſt. *Euſebius*, on *his* principles, *muſt* have univerſal good-will. Self-love obliges him to it; and his own happy ſtate of mind inclines him the ſame way: For all are moſt kind to others when moſt eaſy, and pleaſed with themſelves. On *their* principles, that this world is *all;* or, at leaſt, all they will concern themſelves about; ſelf-love obliges them to the contrary: And their uneaſineſs in themſelves

themſelves ſeconds that obligation: So that you may as well expect to find an angel among the diſſolute, as a friend. And, indeed, can any expect that they ſhould love them, better than their own ſouls? Yet that would they do, if they car'd for them at all.

But, inſtead of endeavouring to prove what needs no proof, I ſhall preſent you with the picture of one of theſe great lovers of all mankind, if you will promiſe not to cut his throat; which picture, better than a *Demoſthenes*, will prove my point. You will know whom I mean, when I tell you, that he is enamoured of the charms, and deep in the myſteries of *play*. That is, he is ſo fond of riches (which a good judge tells us * *nemo bonus unquam concupivit*), of riches is he ſo over-fond, that he is quite miſerable if denied a daily chance of being ſtripped to beggary. Greater profeſſions of friendſhip can no man make, than this arch promiſer: greater proofs of the contrary can no man give. He never did a favour, that proved barren to his own deſigns, but he ſent a curſe after it. All his kindneſſes are artificial flies; if nothing is caught, they are pocketed again. "*Hook him, or hang him,*" is a favourite maxim of his own coining. He ſmiles, indeed, with great complacency on a crouded levee of devoted friends; and no leſs than on a hand of good cards. And his hope from both is juſt the ſame; that is, ſo to play them off, as to win his game. That done, if intereſt, or humour, bids, he throws them aſide as a foul pack, and calls for new; to ſhuffle, and cheat, and play tricks with, as before. He conſiders fools, as trumps, with which he is ſure to win. If there are no fools to be taken in, he makes a pretty

* Salluſt.

good

good hand of it with a knave of the right ſuit. If he is ſo unlucky as not to be bleſſed with either, he gives out, and, for that time, plays no more: For, without a good hand, a bad heart is inſupportable. But proſperity ſooths remorſe, and lays conſcience aſleep. This is one who knows the world; which, generally, means, one that knows not God. He never thought of that great, final ſtake, with regard to which he, that honeſtly but deſires it, is ſure to win; and he that plays foul the moſt dextrouſly, is ſure to be undone. Such is *Avidienus*, ſuch is that *good* man, who, as freely as eat his meal, could lay down his life for his friend.

But, in excuſe for ſuch men, I muſt own, that, for ſuch as place their all here, there can be no ſhadow of ſocial happineſs, but from deceiving, or being deceived. From *deceiving*, and ſo finding ſome account in their villany; or from *being deceived*, and ſo finding ſome account in their folly. For real friendſhip amongſt them is impoſſible: And, indeed, to hope a friend in any man, that is not truly his own friend, is abſurd. From this account, it is evident, that the chief fountain of happineſs is dried up in their hearts.

A *wretch*, almoſt ſmothered with all the reputed means of happineſs, would of all objects be the moſt ridiculous, were it not the moſt melancholy too. *Diogenes* went about the city of *Athens* begging to the ſtatues; being aſked the reaſon, he ſaid, He was learning to bear a repulſe. Theſe gentlemen ſhould learn the ſame leſſon; no ſtatue can be deafer than moſt of their purſuits, when they aſk *real* pleaſure of them.

Theſe

Theſe are the men, who, while Providence lays the reins of free-will on their wanton necks, ruſh headlong into even unimportunate temptations. But when it ſhall put *its hook in their noſe, and its bridle in their jaws;* when it ſhall drag them into the condition of your unhappy friend; or worſe, when the tattered, convulſed, body ſhall be ſhaking out an unwilling ſoul, loth to leave it for a ſtill worſe habitation; then, oh! what a change! It places full before me the laſt hours of that noble youth I mentioned above. *Laſt hours* full of anguiſh! how fit to be remembered by thoſe that wiſh peace to their own! This is the *funeral* to which, in my firſt letter, I promiſed to invite your ſiſter *Sempronia*, and her gay admirers; *Sempronia*, who delights *pſallere, & cantare, elegantius quam neceſſe eſt probæ.* And what invitation more kind than that for which ſhe may thank me for ever, when other entertainments end? If *they* have their wine, *this* has its nectar. Its cup of ſalvation, preſſed from that *Vine, whoſe leaves heal the nations*, and whoſe ſwelling cluſters teem with eternal bliſs. Funeral ſolemnities are more for the ſake of the living than the *dead.* What a trifle that honour they receive from them, to the benefit *we* may reap from that affecting ſcene!

Oh! Sir, how affecting! It is ſtill before my eyes. That wretched youth dies again! Again I am ſmitten with his death. It wounds me even in remembrance: What, then, the ſcene itſelf! No words can paint it; no time efface it; I meet it in my dreams; I ſhall bear it to my grave.

I am about to repreſent to you the laſt hours of a perſon

perſon of high birth, and high ſpirit; of great parts, and ſtrong paſſions, every way accompliſhed, nor leaſt in iniquity. His unkind treatment was the death of a moſt amiable wife; and his great extravagance, in effect, diſinherited his only child.

But to my point. The *death-bed* of a profligate is next in horror to that abyſs, to which it leads. It has the moſt of hell that is viſible on earth. And he that has ſeen it, has more than *faith* to confirm him in his creed. I ſee it now. For who can forget it? Are there in it no flames, and furies?—You know not, then, what a ſcar'd imagination can figure, what a guilty heart can feel. How diſmal is it! The two great enemies of ſoul and body, *ſickneſs* and *ſin*, ſink and confound his friend; ſilence, and darken the ſhocking ſcene. Sickneſs excludes the *light* of heaven; and ſin, its bleſſed *hope*. Oh! double darkneſs! more than *Egyptian!* Acutely to be *felt!*

How unlike thoſe illuminated revels of which he was the ſoul! Did this poor, pallid, ſcarce-animated maſs dictate in the cabinet of *pleaſure;* pronounce the faſhion; and teach the gayeſt to be gay? Are theſe the trophies of his *Paphian* conqueſts? Theſe the triumphs to be bought with heaven? Is this he who ſmote all *their* hearts with envy at his pre-eminence in guilt? See, how he lies a ſad, deſerted outcaſt, on a narrow iſthmus between time and eternity? for he is ſcarce alive. Laſh'd and overwhelmed on one ſide, by the ſenſe of ſin; on the other, by the dread of puniſhment! Beyond the reach of human help, and in deſpair of divine!

His

His diſſipated fortune, impoveriſh'd babe, and murder'd wife, lie heavy on him: The ghoſt of his murder'd time (for now no more is left), all ſtain'd with folly, and gaſh'd with vice, haunts his diſtracted thought. Conſcience, which long had ſlept, *awakes like a giant refreſhed with wine;* lays waſte all his *former* thoughts, and deſires; and, like a long-depos'd, *now* victorious prince, on his bleeding heart, impoſes, inflicts, its *own.* Its late ſoft whiſpers are *thunder* in his ears; and all means of grace rejected, exploded, ridiculed, is the *bolt* that ſtrikes him dead. Dead even to the thoughts of death. In deeper diſtreſs, deſpair of life is forgot. He lies a wretched wreck of man on the ſhore of eternity, and the next breath he draws, blows him off into ruin.

The greateſt profligate is, at leaſt, a momentary ſaint, at ſuch a ſight: For this is a ſight which plucks off the maſk of folly, ſtrips her of her gay diſguiſe, which glittered in the falſe lights of this world's mummery, and makes her appear to be folly, to the greateſt fool.

How think we then? Is not the death-bed of a profligate the moſt natural and powerful antidote for the poiſon of his example? Heals not the bruiſed ſcorpion the wound it gave? Intends not heaven, that, ſtruck with the terrors of ſuch an exit, we ſhould provide comfort for our own? Would not he, who departs obdurate from it, continue adamant, though one roſe from the dead? For ſuch a ſcene partly draws aſide the curtain that divides time from futurity; and, in ſome meaſure, gives to ſight that *tremendous*, of which we only had the feeble report before.

Is

Is not this then a prime ſchool of wiſdom? Are not they obliged, that are invited to this? For what elſe ſhould reclaim us? The pulpit? We are prejudiced againſt it. Beſides, an agonizing profligate, though *ſilent*, out-preaches the moſt celebrated that the pulpit ever knew: But, if he *ſpeaks*, his words might inſtruct the beſt inſtructors of mankind. Mixt in the warm converſe of life, we think with men; on a death-bed, with God.

But there are two leſſons of this ſchool written, as it were, in capitals, which they that run may read. *Firſt*, He that, in this his minority, this ſchool of diſcipline, this field of conflict, inſtead of graſping the weapons of his warfare, is for ever gathering flowers, and catching at butterflies, with his unarmed hand; ever making idle Pleaſures his purſuit; muſt pay for it his vaſt reverſion; and, on opening his final account (for which a death-bed breaks the ſeal), ſhall find himſelf a beggar; a beggar paſt beggary; and ſhall paſſionately wiſh, that his very being were added to the reſt of his loſs.

Secondly, He ſhall find, that *truth*, Divine Truth, however, through life, injured, wounded, ſuppreſſed, is inſuppreſſible, victorious, immortal. That, though with mountains overwhelmed, it will, one day, burſt out like the fires of *Ætna*; viſible, bright, and tormenting, as the moſt raging flame. As now, (Oh! my friend!) I ſhall too plainly prove.

The ſad evening before the death of that noble youth, whoſe laſt hours ſuggeſted theſe thoughts, I was with him. No one was there, but his phyſician, and

and an intimate whom he loved, and whom he had ruined. At my coming in, he ſaid;

"You, and the phyſician, are come too late.—I "have neither life, nor hope. You both aim at mi- "racles. You would raiſe the dead."

Heaven, I ſaid, was merciful—

"Or I could not have been thus guilty. What "has it not done to *bleſs*, and to *ſave* me?—I have "been too ſtrong for Omnipotence! I plucked down "ruin."

I ſaid, The Bleſſed Redeemer—

"Hold! hold! you wound me!—That is the rock "on which I ſplit—I denied his name."

Refuſing to hear any thing from me, or take any thing from the phyſician, he lay ſilent, as far as ſudden darts of pain would permit, till the clock ſtruck. Then with vehemence;

"Oh, Time! Time! It is fit thou ſhould'ſt thus "ſtrike thy murderer to the heart.—How art thou "fled for ever!—A month!—Oh, for a ſingle week! "I aſk not for years. Though an age were too little "for the much I have to do."

On my ſaying, we could not do too much: That heaven was a bleſſed place—

"So-

"So much the worſe. 'Tis loſt! 'Tis loſt!—Hea-
"ven is to me the ſevereſt part of hell."

Soon after, I propoſed prayer.

"Pray you that can. I never prayed. I cannot
"pray.—Nor need I. Is not heaven on my ſide al-
"ready? It cloſes with my conſcience. Its ſevereſt
"ſtrokes but ſecond my *own*."

His friend being much touch'd, even to tears, at this (who could forbear? I could not), with a moſt affectionate look, he ſaid:

"Keep thoſe tears for Thyſelf. I have undone
"thee.—Doſt weep for me? That's cruel. What can
"pain me more?"

Here his friend, too much affected, would have left him.

"No, ſtay. *Thou* ſtill may'ſt *hope*.—Therefore hear
"me. How madly have I talk'd? How madly haſt
"thou liſtened, and believed? But look on my pre-
"ſent ſtate, as a full anſwer to thee, and to myſelf.
"This body is all weakneſs and pain; but my ſoul,
"as if ſtung up by torment to greater ſtrength and
"ſpirit, is full powerful to reaſon; full mighty to ſuf-
"fer. And that, which thus triumphs within the
"jaws of mortality, is, doubtleſs, *immortal*.—And, as
"for a *Deity*, nothing leſs than an Almighty could
"inflict what I feel."

I was about to congratulate this paſſive, involuntary,

tary, confeſſor, on his aſſerting the two prime articles of his creed, extorted by the rack of nature; when he thus, very paſſionately:

"No, no! let me ſpeak on. I have not long to "ſpeak—My much-injured friend! my ſoul, as my "body, lies in ruins; in ſcattered fragments of bro-"ken thought: Remorſe for the paſt throws my "thought on the future. Worſe dread of the future, "ſtrikes it back on the paſt. I turn, and turn, and "find no ray. Didſt thou feel half the mountain that "is on me, thou would'ſt ſtruggle with the martyr "for his ſtake; and bleſs heaven for the flames:— "*That* is not an everlaſting flame; *That* is not an un-"quenchable fire."

How were we ſtruck! Yet, ſoon after, ſtill more. With what an eye of diſtraction, what a face of deſpair, he cried out:

"My principles have poiſoned my friend; my ex-"travagance has beggared my boy; my unkindneſs "has murdered my wife!—And is there another hell? "—Oh! Thou blaſphemed, yet moſt indulgent, Lord "God! hell itſelf is a refuge, if it hides me from "thy frown."

Soon after, his underſtanding failed. His terrified imagination uttered horrors not to be repeated, or ever forgot. And ere the ſun (which I hope has ſeen few like him) aroſe, the gay, young, noble, ingenious, accompliſhed, and moſt wretched, *Altamont* expired.

If this is a man of Pleaſure, what is a man of pain?

How

How quick, how total, is the tranſit of theſe *Phaetontiades!* In what a diſmal gloom they ſet for ever! How ſhort, alas! the day of their rejoicing! *For* a moment they glitter, they dazzle. *In* a moment where are they? Oblivion covers their memories.——Ah! would it did! Infamy ſnatches them from oblivion. In the long-living annals of infamy their triumphs are recorded. Thy ſufferings ſtill bleed in the boſom (Poor *Altamont!*) of the heart-ſtricken friend: For *Altamont had* a friend. He might have had many. With what capacities was he endowed, with what advantages, for being greatly good! But with the talents of an angel a man may be a fool. If he judges amiſs in the ſupreme point, judging right in all elſe but aggravates his folly; as it ſhews him wrong, tho' bleſſed with the beſt capacity of doing right.

Such, ſo fatal, when abuſed, are the greateſt bleſſings of heaven. Heaven grant *his* agonies were an expiation of the paſt; not a preſage, and ſad ſpecimen, of the future. That his ſurviving companions and admirers may never ſuffer the ſame, give me leave to ſpeak to them, while this affecting object is (or might be) in their ſight.

"Ye ſtaunch purſuers of Pleaſure, opening in full "cry on its burning ſcent! who run yourſelves out of "breath, health, credit, eſtate, and often life, after "that you cannot catch! For a moment, ſlacken your "ſpeed, and cool the fervor of your chace. It is a "friend that calls, and he is his *own* that hears.

"If there is a ſcene on earth, in which you can find "greater advantage, than in that to which you have "been

" been invited, do not come: If there is not, indulge " me in a few words, which may not be ſoon forgot: " At leaſt, they will recur to your thoughts, they will " recur to your feeling hearts, when your preſent jo- " vial chace is over; when *Pleaſure* is no more.

" It will be grateful to your friend deceaſed, whom " you were always willing to oblige, if, with his ac- " compliſhments, you remember his faults; for then " you will not forget your *own*; but read, in his deep " diſtreſs, a ſtrong caution againſt them. Affords not " the rock on which he ſplit, a ſolid baſis for your " ſafety? Has he not well marked where miſchief " lies? See you not the wreck of that gallant firſt- " rate? or, rather, is he not a beacon, lighted up by " kind Providence, to guide you ſafe through the " dangerous voyage of human life?

" He once, as you now, imagined himſelf in this " life, immortal. Was he not miſtaken? He has ta- " ken his final flight; whither, who can tell? If you " continue yours, in the ſame fatal track, who is he " that *cannot* tell where the folly muſt end? Smitten, " transfixed, when moſt ſecure, from the moſt tower- " ing heights he dropped, at once, into depths of di- " ſtreſs, not to be fathomed by man. In gaiety of " heart defy not the danger. Are there not more " arrows in the ſame quiver? and are not you as fair " and tempting a mark? more tempting, if unadmo- " niſhed, and mounting ſtill over his forgotten tomb. " And whom dare you attempt? An Archer that " never miſſed his mark.

" But you, from your gay pavilion, embowered in " roſes,

" roſes, ſee no threatening proſpects; no dangers of " death.——Oh, Sirs! Death delights to lie hid in " thickets of roſes! How often the gayeſt fall firſt in " his ſnare! Yet even this is too gentle, too mild, to " anſwer the good-will of heaven; it cannot keep " the world in awe.

" What uncommon fortitude is needful to bear " proſperities unhurt? It is now ſunſhine with you; " and you think all is well. It is the ſeaſon of indul- " gence.—But ſeaſons will change. You that are " now all ſocial comfort, gathered cloſe in glad cluſ- " ters, and (like embodied birds of paſſage bound " for new climes) on your impatient wing for new de- " lights! what will you do, when each of you, ſe- " vered from the reſt, an unexperienced, unexpected, " recluſe, lies ſorely pain'd; dreading worſe; none " to converſe with, but the two greateſt ſtrangers, his " own heart, and Him who made it; and neither at " peace with him? Say, ye ſtrangers to care, and " abounders in mirth! what will he do, when he finds " himſelf ſtill ſubſiſting in a ſtate, where none of thoſe " pleaſures, for which alone he wiſhed to ſubſiſt, can " poſſibly any longer ſubſiſt with him? When the " dark matter at the centre will not be more foreign " to him, than that which now beats high in his " pulſe, and flushes in his cheek! and ſtings him on " to ſchemes, that laugh at ſuch lectures as theſe? " When he finds himſelf led, by the ſoft hand of " *Pleaſure*, to thoſe diſmal gates, which ſhe herſelf " will never, never, never, enter?

" Conſider, my good friends! you ſtill retain the " name of Chriſtians; and have heard of the Scrip-

" tures. To ſpeak their language, If Chriſtians are " racers, you have not yet ſtarted: If warriors, your " armour is not yet on: If labourers in the vineyard, " you pluck down the vine, and get drunk with the " grapes: If watchmen, your nap is not yet over. " There is no man, but in ſome part of life, either " ſtung by ſelf-mov'd conſcience, or alarmed by ſome " providential event, as out of a long idle dream, " ſtarts, at once, into his ſenſes. The longer the " dream, the greater his ſurprize and pain; and if he " nods to the laſt, the pain and horror (as too well " has been prov'd) is inexpreſſible.

" Cannot that awful truth interrupt your ſlumber? " He ſleeps ſound indeed, at whoſe ear a friend's " knell ſhall knock in vain. But, ſetting friendſhip " aſide; granting, that with men of your caſt, a friend " dead is a friend annihilated; aſk, I beſeech you, " pure *ſelf-intereſt* one queſtion; " Have you no con- " cern in *this death? Is it nothing to you?*"——Oh! " much, very much! It cannot ſtand neuter. It is big " with good or ill. It muſt haſten your amendment, " or heighten your offence. Henceforth, the *ſame* " crimes are ſevenfold guilt!

" Have you never conſulted the workings of na- " ture? Have you never been *ſurprized* with a ſerious " feeling of heart? When I ſtand, though a ſtranger, " on the verge of another's grave; when I ſee the " ſhaken mould take poſſeſſion of human pride; and " hear the ſolemn ſound of *duſt to duſt*; what ſwel- " ling of ſoul, but inſtantly ſubſides? What ſalutary " thoughts, but, at once, it inſpires? The grave of " one unknown, and dying a *common* death, would

" have

" have this effect: What then, the grave of a friend,
" and of our *own* character; and that not good; and
" dying of the follies in which *we* live; and with
" admonitions in his mouth, and horrors in his heart?
" What heart impregnable to ſuch an aſſault? What
" thunder equal to ſuch a groan? It would echo for
" ever in a penetrable ear. In a penetrable heart
" there would be wrought a mighty change.

" For ſee you not the mighty force that is implied
" in this mercy? Heaven truſts not to your faith;
" but gives *ſenſible* proof of what you have to fear.
" And could it do more? Would a miracle ſuffice?—
" You have it in a mercy ſo little deſerved. If dan-
" ger can alarm you, you, *now*, are alarmed. If no-
" thing can alarm you, nothing can ſave.

" I ſhould grieve to have ſaid too much. Yet,
" have I ſaid too much, if my words ſerve only to
" render more inexcuſable that imprudence, which
" they labour to remove. Rather know your danger,
" and embrace the plank (though not of cedar) which
" I throw out for your eſcape. Our fondneſs for
" good, ſhuts our eyes on evil; we ſcarce allow it
" exiſtence before it is felt. But, remember, we live
" in a moſt mutable ſcene; and have the fear of to-
" morrow before your eyes. Not the keeneſt diſcern-
" ment can ken through the ſecond of a minute. To
" keep within the reach of mercy, is the grand con-
" cern, and ſupreme bleſſing of human life.

" My *converted!* or *condemned!*
" farewell."

Thus, dear Sir, I ſpeak to theſe gentlemen. I wiſh they do not rather chuſe to ſhew their parts, than their penitence; and criticiſe my *ſpeech*, inſtead of their own conduct. If ſo, they demonſtrate how very great occcaſion there was of *it*; though it proves ineffectual.

Moſt Yours.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

ON

PLEASURE.

DEAR SIR,

YOU ſeem to think, in your laſt letter, that our age is ſo far gone, as to be paſt recovery. I hope not. *Aviola*, a conſul in the time of *Gordian*, revived on his funeral pile. I will not deſpair, but that *Britiſh* virtue, now, like the *phœnix*, dying in its *ſweets*, may ſtart up from its aſhes, and re-aſſume its former glory. I ſhall therefore proceed a little farther.

I grant, that *The Man of Pleaſure*, as well as the good man, has his joy. But their joys are very different. They differ not only in their objects, but their kind. Which is as yet a ſecret to *them*; and, poſſibly, to you. Joy from temporals, is a terreſtrial joy. And, like all things terreſtrial, has a dreg in

it. If you obſerve your own heart, you will find, that joy from temporals, has ever ſomewhat of a gay inquietude, a diſturbed and tumultuous delight. Like ſome liquors, all in unquiet ferment and confuſion, while they ſparkle, and ſmile. Joy from eternals, joy, I mean, on ſpiritual accounts *(viz.) Mens conſcia recti*; or, a delightful hope of immortality; or an humble perſuaſion of Divine Favour, *&c.* This joy is celeſtial, and, like a fine calm ſummer's evening, is undiſturbed, placid, and ſerene. The firſt is a *paſſion*, and that in the ſtricteſt ſenſe; we *ſuffer* from it, as well as *enjoy*. Nay, ſome have ſuffered from it even to death. The latter ſeems rather to be, or to reſemble, an *inſpiration*, in which the divine cauſe takes away, or ſuperſedes, our human infirmity. Therefore, by our church, moſt properly ſtiled *The Peace of God*. Nor let *Centaurs* imagine, that this peace is occaſioned by the ſmallneſs of the joy. No, *It paſſeth all underſtanding*; and is, ſtrictly ſpeaking, a ſpecimen, an actual part of heaven.

For, indeed, the *ſupreme* happineſs, and miſery, of rational beings, through all variation of circumſtances, and through every period of their exiſtence, is of a piece, or of the ſame kind. Though, perhaps, in no two periods of it, of the ſame proportion, or degree. Therefore, heaven and hell, how diſtant ſoever ſome think them, are *really*, though not *fully*, on earth. Where-ever, and whenever, their cauſes, that is, virtue and vice, exiſt, they will exiſt, in a meaſure correſpondent to them. What then are the *good* and *bad*, but the wretched and happy? He, whoſe ſoul repoſes on his firm truſt in God, like the halcyon that builds on the waves, if ſtorms ariſe, may be toſſed, but not endangered.

endangered. Or, grant the worſt, thoſe tumultuous billows that devour others, rock him to reſt eternal.

When the good man lies down to reſt, no fears from the dangers of the night break through his ſtrong confidence in the Divine Protection. When he awakes, his firſt thought lays hold on heaven; which gives thro' the conſecrated day ſuch a ſweetneſs of aſpect and deportment, ſuch a force and firmneſs to his felicity; that we may venture almoſt to ſay, *He cometh forth as a bridegroom from his chamber, and rejoiceth, as a giant, to run his courſe.*

The Man of Pleaſure has his little clouds at the brighteſt, the courſe of his happineſs is retarded by a ſtraw; and any conſiderable, ſcarce conſiderable, accident puts it quite to death. Not only the neceſſaries, or conveniencies, but the decorations, and ſuperfluities of life, are *vital* to his ſickly felicity. In any of them he may receive a deep or deadly wound. Whereas they are mere excreſcences to the good man's happineſs; and he has no more feeling in them than in his hair, or his nail: Nay his happineſs is of ſo ſtrong a conſtitution, that it can ſtand *real* calamities unhurt. Nor quits its *ſerenity* on the confines of the grave; which the Man of Pleaſure but ill retains in the ſunſhine of life.

Of which ſtrange inferiority one cauſe is very obvious. When all our hopes and fears are confined within this narrow ſcene, what an inſupportable importance, what a tyranny over our paſſions, does this give it? what demi-gods does it make our ſuperiors, who can beſtow, what we *moſt* value? We tremble before them. What mountains does it make of little things, becauſe

the greateſt in *our* inventory? We turn pale, ſometimes die, at their loſs. But, the firſt moment we take God for our protector, and his precious promiſes for our chief portion, our ſuperiors, even kings, ſhrink to men; and crowns imperial loſe their luſtre. Little things *are* little, and leave our hearts at reſt. As a taper to the ſun; ſuch the ſun to the *glories that ſhall be revealed.* Looking to the cloſe of the drama, we reſume our native dignity; nor are longer over-awed on the ſtage, by our fellows; or, perhaps, our inferiors *behind* the ſcene. Nay, ſometimes, *on* it too. When, like poor *Altamont*, they are forced to change their plume for the warm cap of ſickneſs; and are unbuttoning their buſkins on the bed of anguiſh, terror, and death.

And muſt this, one day, be the caſe? after having run the gauntlet of diſappointing, painful, pleaſures, and, for ſome years, being afflicted with delights; to drop unregarded, unlamented, infamous, into puniſhment far greater, *for* the puniſhment they have already undergone.——Of human happineſs what a diſmal account is this! Yet this is the true. Let us, therefore, enquire if it is not worſe than *they* deſerve.

Our *Men of Pleaſure* affect much being *Men of Honour* too; that is, they are as proud, as they are diſſolute: or, in other words, they will not ſtoop to mean and little vices; they deal only in great. They ſcorn to pick a pocket; but triumph in cutting a throat. If their *immaculate* honour is violated by word, look, or thought, then they trample all the laws of religion, juſtice, and humanity, without remorſe. My *enquiry* will join *The Man of Honour* and *The Man of Pleaſure* together. But how ſhall I enquire? How ſhall I know the

the heart of theſe men? And that only can inform me right. Let us then conſider what theſe men's *prayer* would be, if they prayed at all. For what is a prayer, but addreſſing to ſome ſuperior power, the real deſires of our hearts?

Thus then I will ſhew you an exact picture of their hearts. There was ſo maſterly a copy of a capital picture of *Julio Romano*, taken by one of his ſcholars, that he ſwore it was his own original drawing. I hope ſo to copy their hearts, that they ſhall imagine, that it is not I, but they themſelves, that ſpeak. The deſires of their hearts, if cloathed in words, would run to the following purpoſe.—But, *firſt*, this caution: Let not that offend pious ears, which paſſes in an impious heart; and which, for the ſake of *piety* (though, perhaps, not without ſome ſhock to it), is drawn out into light.

The PROFLIGATE's PRAYER.

"O Thou! whoſe omnipotence is but a *ſecond* attri-
"bute, an able ſervant to thy delight. Thou
"great fountain of *Pleaſure!* as *ſuch* I adore thee.
"Pleaſure alone makes me devout; and let devotion
"advance my Pleaſure. For I am not more devout,
"than modeſt; I aſk not, yet, for heaven. Give me
"my heaven on earth. Let *Mahomet*'s paradiſe de-
"ſcend, and bleſs me on this ſide the grave. Let my
"*honour* too ſhine before men; and let none ſee my
"heart,—but Thee. *Noctem peccatis, & fraudibus objice*
"*nubem.* Give my luſts a long and proſperous reign
"over me; and let not religion approach to hurt me.

" Lead me into temptation, and give me ſtrength to " comply with it. And deliver me from all evil, that " may mar my delights. Let me be (as I have been) " a brute while I live, and an angel (if angels there " are) when I die."

Is the good man ſhocked at this? Yes; and the profligate too. Few know the foulneſs of their own hearts. A famous modern, when, in an age he had loſt his underſtanding, paſſing by a looking glaſs, cried out in compaſſion, " *Poor old Man!*" not knowing it to be himſelf. Thus the profligate, at ſight of this mirror, equally ignorant, no doubt will cry out in ſurprize, " *Horrid wretch!*" I anſwer, therefore, to the queſtion above, *viz. Is it not worſe than* they *deſerve?* That *Men of Pleaſure*, themſelves being judges, deſerve the worſt.

In contraſt to *this* (and ſure it wants an antidote), accept that piece of devotion you deſired on your friend's account; and may it prove of ſome little ſervice to him!

Devout THOUGHTS of the Retired PENITENT.

" YES, bleſſed, ever bleſſed be the Divine Indul- " gence for *this*. How wanted, how welcome, " this aſylum? this receſs? Here earth holds its peace; " and heaven's voice can be heard. Heaven's voice, if " we liſten, ever ſpeaking in the human heart. Here " let me commune with my ſo-long-anxious heart; " which has frequently called on me for an audience, " and found me pre-engaged. Or elſe, the rude world

" broke

"broke in on our conference; and fatally puſhed it "off till a farther day. Though (ſhocking to conſi- "der!) though a depending eternity often chid my "delay.

"While the noiſe of the world beats its drum in- "our ears; and its buſtle, and hurry, throws its duſt "in our eyes; who can hear the ſoft whiſpers of con- "ſcience, or read the ſtrong demands of reaſon, though "written in capitals, on the compoſed and diſenchanted "heart? I now read, hear, and tremble. I tremble "at that, in which I once triumphed. I bluſh at that, "of which I, once, was vain. Oh, *Pleaſure! Pleaſure!* "what art thou? The death of reaſon. And with "reaſon dies the whole heaven, as well as character, "of man.

"The cloud now a little broken, which wrapped me "up in night, look round, my ſoul enlarged; and ſay, "where, or what am I? An immenſity around me! "an eternity before me! a ſhadow, my Pleaſure! a "moment, my time! a vapour, my life! And ſhall a "moment, ſhade, vapour, engage all my love? engroſs "all my thought? Shall it bid an angel from heaven "wait my better leiſure? Bid the great Father of an- "gels defer his call 'till to-morrow?—What, O my "ſoul! if He ſhould call no more?—Good God! If "He ſhould call no more? If He ſhould leave thee to "thyſelf?—Where, then, is hope? Where, then, is "man?

"Man, deſperate man, the firſt moment he ſets up "for himſelf, and, impatient of controul, takes the "rein into his own mad hands: the firſt moment he

" is at liberty, he is the greateſt of ſlaves. How ſhack-
" led! how harraſs'd! how ſtarved! In the midſt of
" his riots, what a famine of joy? None can be wiſe
" for time, that are fools for eternity. Dreadful in-
" dependence! the firſt moment man quits hold of his
" Creator, he drops! In diſtraction and ruin, how
" unfathomed his fall!

" Out of that deep, I call unto Thee, O Lord! Lord,
" hear my voice. Diſſolve the charm that ties me
" down to delights trifling, terreſtrial, infernal; and
" give me wings to riſe into day, and reach the things
" that belong to my peace. Where is the creature,
" which Thou haſt made? Where is the heart which
" Thou haſt given? This ſink of pollution! this neſt
" of all vices! it could not come from Thee. No,
" I have ſnatched it out of thy bleſſed hand, and let
" it fall in the mire. What is it to me, that *thy mercy*
" *is over all thy works*, ſince I am *not* what Thou haſt
" made?

" I have ſlept on a precipice, and dreamt I was in
" heaven. Slept on its very brink; though vengeance
" frowned over me, and flames roared beneath. What
" horrors awake me! What a gulph lies before me!
" What mercy has ſaved me! Where had I been, had
" I died yeſterday? Oh, let this load, this mountain-
" ous load, on my heart, ſink me lower, and lower
" ſtill, in adoration that I live! Had I felt *theſe* pangs
" before,—before I had been reclaimed.—Thou, that
" beareſt up the pillars of the earth, ſupport my ſpirits!
" —Where had I been, if yeſterday had been my laſt?
" Where—oh where?—And eternal too!—*Eternal!*—

" O

" O Lord, God Almighty! could thy thunder ſhake
" me more?

" Thou glorious God, who makeſt the thunder! let
" me climb above creation; and ſoar into thoughts of
" Thee.—How I wander up and down, bewildered
" and benighted, through the *boundleſs* of ſuch a con-
" templation? Where, what, who, how, art Thou?
" Source of all Being! Centre of all Good! Great
" Antient of days! before the birth of time! beyond
" the comprehenſion of angels! Filler of Immenſity!
" who lookeſt down on the higheſt; and the loweſt
" doſt ſupport?—ſupport even me.

" Support me while I labour at ſome idea of my
" God——but I labour in vain. Thou moſt obvious,
" and moſt occult! moſt preſent, and moſt abſent of
" beings! how much of Thee is *enjoyed?* How little
" of Thee is *known?* I am *in* Thee, yet cannot find
" Thee. I can neither go from Thee, nor to Thee.
" Clouds, and thick darkneſs are thy pavilion! Won-
" ders paſſing wonders, through the moment of *time*,
" and the immenſe of *eternity*, guard, and aggrandize,
" thy tremendous throne!

" Before *ſuch* a Judge, O my ſoul! art thou to plead
" thy cauſe; to pour out thy deep ſorrows, and deep-
" er ſins; to tremble out thy complaint? Oh! let me
" annihilate myſelf before Him. Nor *wretch*, nor
" *man*, nor *angel*, is any thing in His ſight, 'till he is
" nothing in his own. Who, Lord! ever thought on
" Thee, and was not confounded? And give me leave
" to add, Who, Lord! ever prayed to Thee (as he
" ought), and was not bleſſed? For which infinite

" mercy

" mercy from the firſt thrones in heaven, to the meaneſt
" worm on earth, he payed all homage, praiſe, and ado-
" ration; conſtant, profound, ardent, and eternal!

PART II.

" Are they that pray, bleſſed?—But what is that
" to me! Dare I to pray? To whom is prayer addreſ-
" ſed? Oh! how dreadful in majeſty! more dreadful in
" vengeance! dreadful to the bleſſed above! more
" dreadful to man! more ſtill to the ſinner! what then
" to the deepeſt in ſin? May not I then ſay (as is ſaid,
" Lord God Almighty, of thy bleſſed Self), *Hell is open*
" *before* me; *deſtruction hath no covering?* Where then
" ſhall I fly? I cannot fly from thy preſence. I dare
" not ſtand in it. Should I ſink to the centre, I am
" ſtill in thy ſight. Even darkneſs detects me! even
" flight brings me nigh! Oh! Thou that doſt light the
" ſun, as a taper; or tread it out, as a ſpark! Why
" *ſtill* in being, a wretch ever deſtined to pain? Oh!
" let me be nothing; or, let me be Thine.

" And what a nothing, indeed, am I? What a no-
" thing, compared, is man?—Thou that inhabiteſt
" eternity! my foundation is in the duſt. Lord moſt
" Holy! I was conceived in ſin. God moſt Mighty!
" what weaker than man! Great! Holy! Mighty!
" Three Perſons, and One God! Creator! Redeemer!
" Sanctifier! Three Benefactors, and One Being!
" with what indignation doſt Thou behold a wretch
" of ſuch complicated guilt? a ſinner to Thee, to the
" Public, and Himſelf?

" And dare I then approach? The preſumption how
" great?

" great?—But greater to forbear. To ſin is bad: To
" deſpair is fatal. Oh! moſt merciful Jeſus! what
" refuge, but in Thee! Yet dare I not meet thy face:
" I come trembling behind Thee. If I touch but the
" hem of thy garment, I ſhall be whole. Even dogs
" may eat of the crumbs that fall from their maſter's
" table.—For that bountiful grant, what adoration is
" due? With proſtration profound I cannot but adore.
" —What adoration is equal? I cannot adore aright.
" Or could I! I am unworthy to lift an eye to thy
" throne. *My* incenſe has no odour; *my* anthem, no
" praiſe.

" But Thou, Lord, wide as the arch of heaven, doſt
" extend thy compaſſionate arms to receive a return-
" ing world. As the ſands of the ſea are thy mercies,
" and (with horror let me ſpeak it) *my* tranſgreſſions.
" I have looked on an unfeeling heart, as a quiet con-
" ſcience: On a multitude of ſinners, as an apology
" for ſin: And on the faſhion of the world, as a re-
" peal of thy laws. I have been thankleſs, for what
" Thou haſt moſt bountifully given: Senſeleſs of what
" Thou haſt moſt bountifully promiſed: Provoking,
" under the greateſt obligations: Peeviſh, and impa-
" tient, under the ſmalleſt evils: Riotous under thy
" judgments: And by thy bleſſings, moſt unbleſſed:
" I turned them into poiſon; and by my proſperity
" was undone.

" I have ſtudied iniquity as a ſcience: Being vain
" of diſtinction in it; and aſhamed of my duty: I have
" bluſhed at the glance of a man, and a man moſt mi-
" ſtaken; and ſet my face as a flint againſt reaſon,
" and againſt Thee: I have even borrowed infidel

" ſcraps

" ſcraps for the credit of the day; and run in debt for " deſtruction: Time given for repentance, I turned " over to folly; and made the Divine Mercy a pro- " moter of ſin. Nay, I have ſinned even beyond my " power. What ſchemes have I laid, which thy " goodneſs diſappointed? How many crimes have I " committed, which never came to paſs?

" With ſuch overflowing of ungodlineſs I quench- " ed Thy bleſſed Spirit; I have trod, with thy Divine " Laws, thy precious blood, under foot. All this, " Lord! Thou knoweſt; and yet I ſtill live: All this, " Thou haſt ſeen; and yet haſt Thou held thy peace. " Thou haſt ſhortened thine arm; and curbed ven- " geance in air; though called for (if daring *can* call " for thy vengeance) to fall on my head.

" How long, Lord! haſt Thou forborne me! And " forborne when thine arrows went abroad: Though " I ſtood in the firſt rank of offenders; nor ever lift- " ed up the ſhield of devotion; quite naked in ſin. " My leſs vicious companions fell frequent around " me; and diſmal was their fall. I waſhed off its me- " mory in the next welcome debauch; and the juſt " cauſe of remorſe but redoubled my guilt. By ad- " monitions unadmoniſhed, by thy mercies unſoften- " ed, by my own ſentiments unawed, by my own con- " viction unconvinced, I cenſured their conduct, and " trod on in their ſteps. I deplored their ſad exit, " and poſted on to my own: Becauſe ſpared, when " moſt obnoxious, I thought myſelf immortal. In e- " very path of Pleaſure, in every flight of ambition, " what gay, ſanguine, multitudes of thoſe born after " me, and in every promiſe of life to be placed before

" me,

" me, have I ſeen riſe, bloom, triumph, languiſh, de-
" cay, and die? What a myſtery of mercy is this!
" And what a miracle of madneſs am I! Amid this
" mighty field of ſlaughter am I ſtill alive?—While I
" doubt if I ſtill live, I live on in my crimes. Nay
" my very repentance increaſes the number. Re-
" pentance ſo languid; ſo far ſhort of my guilt!

PART III.

" Lord! from that ſtupendous height, towards
" which the cherubims lift up an eye in vain, bow
" down thine ear, and hear.—O Lord! hear me *not*.
" For what have I to plead? what excuſe to cover,
" what palliation to ſoften, my guilt? Can my confeſ-
" ſion of ſin weigh aught in my favour? I fear, not a
" grain; for wherefore have I confeſſed my tranſ-
" greſſions? becauſe I could not conceal them. Thou
" knoweſt even thoſe, that are unknown to myſelf.
" But then, Lord! I have been tempted.—Yes, and
" I have courted temptation. Frail nature has ſedu-
" ced me.—And have I not indulged my ſeducer?
" Public example bore hard on me.—And I rejoiced
" in that excuſe. I have ſinned with my fathers.—
" True, but I have ſinned beyond them. What age
" for indulgence has ſo looſened the rein? And who,
" in ſuch an age, has ruſhed farther in ill, than the
" wreteh at thy feet?

" But is there nothing in counterbalance? no dawn-
" ings of good? no pretenſions, at leaſt, to virtue, to
" lighten the loaded ſcale? Yes; I have been an ad-
" vocate for virtue—That I might remove all ob-
" ſtructions in vice. I have gone to thy temple——

" But

" But left my heart behind. Nay, I have prayed—
" But wiſhed not what I aſked. I have aimed at
" humility—Out of pride. I have given—But with-
" out charity. I have been kind, the very kindeſt
" of men—To gain power of being cruel, as the moſt
" malignant of foes. My devotion to Thee has been
" abſolutely declined; yet never have I repented, but
" of *omiſſions* in guilt; nor ever had a *darling* joy, but
" what is the parent of my *preſent* grief.

" On ſearching my own heart, that abyſs of cor-
" ruption, I find there is hardly a virtue which my
" hypocriſy has not worn, as a maſk; hardly a vice
" which my preſumption has not acted under it. By
" theſe abandoned means bringing into diſcredit vir-
" tue of others the moſt ſincere; and making more
" heinous my own deepeſt guilt: to the public a ſcarce
" leſs pernicious peſt, than a fatal aſſaſſin to myſelf.
" Thus, Lord! all my pleas but inflame my indict-
" ment; and ſeeking excuſes, but diſcovers new
" crimes.

" But, as I diſcover new crimes in myſelf by my
" own awakened reflection; by the gift of thy Grace,
" I diſcover new goodneſs, new glories, new won-
" ders, in Thee. I have lived in darkneſs, in the ſha-
" dows of eternal death. I wrapped myſelf up in
" the world, I ſaw nothing; but what had been bet-
" ter unſeen, what made me blind to Thee. But now
" thy Divine attributes break in upon me, like the
" morning; and awake me to thy preſence. I ſee
" Thee in every thing. And ſeeing, I adore. And
" adoring tremble.

" Thine

" Thine attributes, at once, all lighten upon me;
" and ſtrike me, like him of *Tarſus*, thy leſs perſecu-
" ting foe; they ſtrike me to the duſt. Thy moſt
" aweful Omnipreſence; thy moſt incomprehenſible
" Glory; thy moſt unbounded Wiſdom; exquiſite Ju-
" ſtice; and ineffable Goodneſs! Goodneſs, how ineff-
" fable! And to me, Lord! to *me* how unſupportable.
" That chief cauſe of my confuſion! ſevere upbraider
" of my conduct! and terrible aggravation of my
" guilt! If thy goodneſs thus pains me; what then
" will thy vengeance? When thy vengeance awakes
" (cover me, O ye mountains!) When thy vengeance
" awakes—Oh! mercy! mercy! mercy!—Thou
" mighty to ſave! oh! have mercy upon me.

" And mercy thou wilt have, thou Father of all
" mercies! of mercy, redundant, inexhauſtible, ſource!
" Thou wilt not condemn him, who condemns him-
" ſelf. Who trembles at his own tribunal. Who is
" ſcarce ſtruck with more horror at vengeance, than
" at guilt. At *ſuch* guilt! and to *ſuch* a Maſter!
" whoſe bounties enabled me ſo ſignally to ſin; and
" who, my ſin ſo provoking, ſo long over-looked.

" But I repent. Lord! I repent—Yet how dry
" are theſe eyes? how hard is this heart? Strike thou
" the rock, and the waters flow. Let not him, who
" groans under his tranſgreſſions, groan under thy
" diſpleaſure. Thou Giver, Guider, Lover, yea,
" Buyer, of Souls! and, at what a price? Who doſt
" hear the very thoughts of the wounded at heart?
" Hear, pity, ſpare! Nor let the Lord be angry, if I
" preſume to add—Oh! ſpare thy paternal tender-
" neſs, oh ſave it from its averſion; its *ſtrange work.*

" Vengeance

" Vengeance is an alien to thy moſt amiable nature.
" Ruin is a ſubverſion of thy moſt glorious ſcheme.

" Though common ſenſe has deſerted me; and a
" *legion* poſſeſſed me; though I have contradicted my
" own reaſon; and ſought my own heart, which ſtood
" in defence of thy laws; though I have ſtruggled
" hard for madneſs; and taken ruin by force; yet
" let not compaſſion be quite a ſtranger in heaven.
" Let not thine anger burn for ever. Wherefore is
" the Lord angry, becauſe I am a ſinner? What elſe
" canſt thou forgive. Becauſe my ſin is great? If
" pardoned, the greater the glory. Thy ſervant is
" wicked: but ſtill a ſervant. Thy ſon a prodigal:
" but ſtill a ſon, Though a ſon's duty has been want-
" ing in me; loſe not Thou, boundleſs love! *all* the
" bowels of a father. Am not I the work of thyhand?
" Do not deſpiſe it. An image of thy majeſty? Do
" not blot it out. The price of thy blood? Oh! caſt
" it not away. Shall things incompatible combine
" to my deſtruction? Can I be related to ruin, and
" to Thee? Let it be thy bleſſed pleaſure to reclaim,
" not to deſtroy me; if deſtroyed, thy foe will triumph;
" if reclaimed, there is joy in heaven; and ten times
" ten thouſand will ſing praiſe round thy throne.

PART IV.

" But if I am pardoned, who then can be puniſhed?
" What ſtains can condemn, if an *Æthiop* eſcapes?
" The regions of darkneſs are part of thy creation;
" and horrors infernal were not made in vain. My
" crimes, in themſelves, how great? as committed in
" defiance of *Infinite Majeſty*, they are greater ſtill.

" What

" What then ſhall I ſay? To what ſhadow of excuſe " ſhall I fly?—Pardon, Lord! the weakneſs of my " reaſon, if I judge, or, rather, hope, amiſs; Thine " *Infinite Majeſty*, ſeems to plead *for* me. Fain would " I find an advocate in *that;* in that very cauſe, " which moſt heightens my guilt.

" For what, my Lord! am I? a poor complex of " littleneſs and vanity; the very centre of infirmities; " a combination of all cauſes, that can call for thy " compaſſion. Frail fleſh, and fleeting ſpirit! a moth! " a worm! a flower of the field! To-day, and not to- " morrow! at morning, and not at night! not maſter " of a moment; not a match for a breeze! A dream! " a vapour! a ſhadow! a thing of nought! poſting " through daily doubt and danger, toil and trouble, " into trodden duſt and aſhes!

" Such am I! ſuch was I made!—and made by " Thee: And now, Lord! wilt Thou make bare an " arm Almighty againſt me? wilt Thou lift up a bolt " that can cruſh creation, againſt its meaneſt worm? " (oh! pardon what diſtreſs compels me to plead) " thine *Infinite Majeſty* declares againſt it: that reſ- " cues the ſinner, though it enhances the ſin. Does " not my meanneſs diſarm thy might? Is not the great- " neſs of the offended, the offender's defence? I am, " indeed, unworthy, moſt unworthy, thy favour: but " am I not unworthy thy reſentment too? Thou that " ſitteſt on the higheſt heavens, and ſeeſt worlds infi- " nite dance beneath thee, as atoms in the ſun!— " Wilt Thou, oh! wilt Thou, not remember, that I " am but duſt?

" Yes,

" Yes, Lord! Thou wilt remember it: Thou wilt " remember thy glorious Self; what ancient days re- " found; what wonders Love Divine has wrought of " old. For to whom do I cry? Art thou not He, to " whom none ever cried in vain! Who created not, " but to bleſs: commands not, but to preſerve; nor " puniſhes, but to reclaim. Who has not more re- " lieved, than amazed with his extremities of love! " for art Thou not the ſame Lord, who, though moſt " offended, as if Thou wert the offender, *beſeeches us* " to be reconciled? Who mourns over the impeni- " tent? and over the impenitent for ſins againſt Him- " ſelf? And when his ſorrow can't prevail, even " weeps in their ſtead? thoſe tears obdurate *Jeruſa-* " *lem* would not ſhed, didſt Thou not take to thy own " bleſſed lids, which overflowed at the bare proſpect " of its ruin? Who, without pious terror, without the " greateſt aſtoniſhment, can think on theſe things? " or, who, without comfort, ſtill greater than *that?*

" Nor end our healing hopes of comfort here; not " only to beſeech, commiſerate, and weep, deſcended " the Lord of Glory, and Eternal Life, but to die. " And *what* a death? And after *what* a life? A life " of compaſſions, without number, and beyond mea- " ſure: What a ſhining progreſs, what a ſtupendous " aſcent in love? He meets the returning prodigal: " looks compaſſion on denying *Peter;* rejects not diſ- " believing *Thomas:* admits ſinful *Magdalen:* par- " dons the taken adultereſs: and aſſociates to himſelf, " in Paradiſe (where angels caſt their crowns at his " feet), a thief from the croſs. What a marvellous " and moſt adorable climax is this? And is it poſſible

" for

" for love to riſe higher ſtill? Oh! let it riſe higher,
" and reach even me.

" What am I, Thou moſt exuberant Fountain of
" Love! that I ſhould ſet a bound to ſuch compaſ-
" ſion as this? Can *ocean* be repelled by a ſingle grain
" on the ſhore? What a triumph of mercy to pluck
" the ruined from ruin? What an *omnipotent* action
" to ſave the moſt loſt? Though pleaſure has fooled
" me; though reaſon, conſcience, heaven, nay, and
" earth too, in one ſcale, has been outweighed by a
" feather in the other; though, with *Eſau*, I ſold my
" birthright for nothing; yet, Lord! let theſe diſtrac-
" tions of thought, theſe convulſions of heart, theſe
" pangs of the wretch, if not the prayer of the peni-
" tent, reach the foot of thy throne: For His dear
" ſake who ſpared not his moſt precious blood; oh!
" ſpare, pardon, bleſs; yes, bleſs me, even me, O my
" *Father!* Yes, Thou all-ſurrounding, all-pervading,
" all-ſuſtaining, and all-bleſſing Majeſty of heaven!
" bleſs me, even me, O my *God!*

" *Thou!* who if thou moveſt thy lip it thunders: if
" thou lifteſt thine eye, the ſun is dark: who haſt thy
" way in the whirlwind; and walkeſt on the wings of
" the wind: who ſitteſt above the heavens, and hideſt
" thy footſteps in the great deep! But (above all,)
" whoſe ſuperabundant effluence, whoſe ocean of love,
" overflows the whole creation! add to theſe wonders
" one wonder more—the forgiveneſs of guilt like
" mine: hear the ſuppliant voice, ſee the bleeding bo-
" ſom, theſe throes, theſe throbs of the moſt vile and
" abandoned—but moſt repentant, and heart-broken,
" of men.

" *Then*,

"*Then*, Lord! come the worſt, I will not complain. "My joy ſhall burſt its way through the frowns of "the world; and the ſhadows of death. Then— "*Bleſſings, and honour, and glory, and power be to Him* "*who ſitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb*, who nails "ſin to his croſs!—Thus will I ſing in ſpite of my "groans! Thus will I ſing with my laſt expiring "breath! Thus will I ſing for ever, and ever.

"Amen. O my ſoul! Amen, Amen."

This, Sir, is that importunate, ardent, perſevering, ſpirit of addreſs, which was ſuitable to the ſtate of the perſon from whom I borrowed it. It may poſſibly (partly at leaſt) ſuit ſome others. And I thought it inhuman to gaze, ſo long as I have done, on the diſeaſe, without aiming at ſome expedient to mitigate its malignity. There is a ſovereign balm in prayer.

I know, Sir, there are certain quietiſts in devotion, ſaints of great repoſe in prayer, who may cenſure this, as too warm. But, when ſhould we be warm, if not when our eternity is at ſtake? Shall we be warm in our vices? and cool in our repentance? Were our paſſions given for nothing? or given only as the ſervants of ſin? Is it not heaven, but its reverſe, that is to be taken by violence? I, therefore, drop this diſpute, not only as *unchriſtian*, but *undeiſtical* too: for, if there is a God, all our affections are too feeble, all the wings of our ſoul are too few, to be put forth in purſuit of his favour; and being languid in devotion, is, being ſolemnly undevout. If there is a God, he gave us our paſſions, as well as our reaſon, they therefore, as well as reaſon, ſhould aſſiſt in his ſervice. And, indeed, reaſon without them, though it may loudly

loudly tell, will but lamely perform, our duty. How great a part of the ſcripture muſt theſe men's kind of criticiſm explode? Poor *David* muſt break his harp, leſt it give offence. Even angels have their paſſions, nor are any beings exempt from the *need* of them on this ſide the throne of God. Whatever exemption ſome may fancy in their own favour, let us, my friend, who have ſeen the neceſſity of devotion for others, not neglect our own. Nor, in the pride of inſtructing, loſe the prudence of ſafety.

You and I, my friend! lie under two diſadvantages in this point: the world's example, and our own years. It is an undevout age: and will you not be ſurprized to hear me ſay, that ours is an undevout period of life?—Yet it is moſt certain, that there is a tenderneſs of heart, and a ſuſceptibility of awe, with regard to God, as well as man, in youth, which, in moſt, is wanting afterwards. This want is an enemy we muſt fight, and fervent prayer, that *ſword of the ſpirit*, is the beſt weapon againſt him. Prayer, becauſe the moſt eaſy of duties, ſeems, with many, the hardeſt to be performed. It coſts them ſo little pains, they think they may as well let it alone. Whereas, it is the ſupreme, the great, mother-duty; all other duties, and virtues, are its progeny; are brought forth, nurſed, nouriſhed, and ſuſtained by it. Devotion is the ſole aſylum of human frailty, and ſole ſupport of heavenly perfection: it is the golden chain of union between heaven and earth; keeps open the bleſſed communication;

—*Geminique facit commercia regni.* CLAUD.

He that has never prayed, can never *conceive*, and he that has prayed as he ought, can never *forget*, how much is to be gained by prayer.

Dear Sir,

Yours.

LET-

LETTER V.

LIFE's REVIEW.

The GENERAL CAUSE of SECURITY in SIN.

THOUGHTS for AGE.

LETTER V.

LIFE'S REVIEW.

The General CAUSE of Secu-
rity in SIN.

THOUGHTS for AGE.

LETTER V.

LIFE's REVIEW.

DEAR SIR,

IN this and the following letters I ſhall touch on five points: *Life's Review: The General Cauſe of Security in Sin: Thoughts for Age: The Dignity of Man: The Centaur's Reſtoration to Humanity.* The three firſt are naturally ſuggeſted to me, by the world's wickedneſs, and our own; and our advanced time of life. The fourth, *viz. The Dignity of Man*, is naturally ſuggeſted by the notoriety of its reverſe in thoſe, for whoſe ſake theſe letters are principally written. For who can look on *Lucifer* in his abyſs, without thinking of that height from which he fell? By which alone we can take any juſt meaſure of his calamity. And the fifth point, *viz. The Centaur's Reſtoration to Humanity*, is forcibly impoſed on me by the tranſporting thought, that *ſuch* an event is poſſible. Yet, ſhould it take place, poſterity will ſcarce believe it:

Annalium noſtrorum laboravit fides. L. FLO.

I begin with *The Review of Life*; and that, though chiefly for our own ſakes, yet alſo for the ſake of all

our grey-headed boys, as *Sudbury*, *Torriſmond*, *Ironſide*, &c. for though beaſts of ſo groſs a claſs as they chooſe to rank with, ſcarce deſerve to be brought to the manege, yet pupils not yet expelled the ſchool of life, ought ſtill, if poſſible, to be taught the leſſon they have ſo long neglected; and I offer myſelf gladly for their tutor; though I fear they would prefer a *tetanothrum* * to an *apotheoſis*: Their erudition will not leave them at a loſs to know what I mean.

There is nothing of which men are more liberal than their good advice, be the ſtock of it ever ſo ſmall; becauſe it ſeems to carry in it an intimation of our own influence, importance, or worth. We (for you approved it; *we*, I ſay), have beſtowed abundance of it on our Centaurs, which, I fear, will bring us in but little thanks. Let us, therefore, return from abroad, come to ourſelves; and ſee if our export of wiſdom may not be wanted at home. We have cenſured the aged; are we not ſuch ourſelves? Is there no folly to be found, but at aſſemblies and maſquerades? Or is folly not folly, becauſe it hits our own taſte? Let us lay the line to our own conduct: Let us drop foreign ware, and put ourſelves into the ſcale.

Yes, my friend! let us make a ſhort viſit to our former ſelves. They are, indeed, great ſtrangers; nor much to be liked: Yet it is a viſit all ſhould make who wiſh well to the future of life. *A Review of Life* is an employment agreeable but to few; becauſe none *can* look back without ſelf-condemnation; and none *will* look forward but with ſelf-flattery. But though the

* A medicine to take out wrinkles.

the taſk may be bitter, it is wholeſome too. Aſk you, "What advantage from it?"—It is the only way of taking my Centaur's advice, and *knowing ourſelves*. A man can ſee himſelf in retroſpection only. When warm in action, he is ever looking on ſomething elſe; on his point in view: Or, if he could ſee himſelf, he could not judge aright, either of himſelf, or others. While warm in action, prejudices, and paſſions, excited by the *then* preſent objects, and incidents, corrupt his judgment. But in a cool review, he becomes rather a *byſtander*, than the *party*; and is patient of truth. His *then* former rivals are no longer rivals; therefore he judges better of *men*. His former points of view are no longer points of view; therefore he judges better of *things*. He can judge, nay he cannot but judge, as impartially of himſelf, as of the reſt of mankind.

Wiſdom is the growth of experience: But experience is not the growth of action, but of reflection on it. In an active life is *ſown* the ſeed of wiſdom; but he, who reflects not, never *reaps*; has no harveſt from it; but carries the burden of age, without the wages of experience; nor knows himſelf old, but from his infirmities, the pariſh-regiſter, and the contempt of mankind. And what has age, if it has not eſteem?—It has nothing.

Starting, my friend! from the ſame goal, through different paths, which ſevered our fortune, not our affection, we have run our race; and now approach its end. Jaded with our long journey, the ſpur of ambition blunted, and our ſpirits off their ſpeed, we are glad of reſt. In which, reflection on the paſt is

not only *useful*, but extremely *natural*. Look on the ſtormy ſea, whoſe billows reach the clouds; then on the peaceful lake, where the feather, or fallen leaf, lies unmoved; and you ſee the difference between the cool evening, and warm meridian of man. Reflection is as natural to one, as action to the other. Unactive youth, and unreflecting age, are equal blanks in the book of life. Man varies no leſs than thoſe varying inſects at which he wonders. In his morning he crawls: long ere noon, flutters, and flies; at evening, chilled into languor, he creeps into corners, lies hid, and ſleeps; or, if awake, having but little ground before him, nor that the beſt: How naturally he looks back on the paſt? How naturally his winter's evening calls for its tale? And to ſelf-love, what tale ſo natural as our own? How idle ſoever our *tale* has been, if we can draw ſome *moral* from it, that will abate its inſignificance, and give it ſome little weight by making us wiſer for the future.

And want we not to be wiſer? On how many fruitleſs friendſhips, ill-judged enmities, raſh preſumptions, cowardly deſpairs, unmanly flatteries, bold indecencies, idle ſchemes, airy hopes, groundleſs fears, opportunities loſt, admonitions ſlighted, eſcapes unacknowledged, evils improved, bleſſings neglected, and trifles admired; on what a ſwarm of infirmities I look back with ſhame? How ambitious have we been in our attachments, not aware that all, moſt worth our ambition, we can give ourſelves? How fearful of expences, not aware, that, till it eſcapes the gripe, and takes its flight into ſome prudent uſe, money is not *wealth;* that it truly becomes *ours* only by our parting with it? How fond have we been of applauſe, not aware

aware that human, ſeparate from ſuperior, applauſe, is the greateſt vanity, as well as the moſt common purſuit, in life? How plainly I now ſee, that few things are more pernicious than too keen an appetite for applauſe, except a bold defiance of juſt reproach? *That* makes coxcombs; *this*, felons; this calls for deteſtation; that, for contempt.

How plainly do I now ſee, that our ignorance has been great? How often have we been ſo idle as to complain of our wants; that is, of our capacity of being happy? For, without wants, there would be no deſires, and without deſires, no gratification of them; and, without gratification of deſire, no happineſs; for *human* happineſs, nay happineſs of all created beings, conſiſts in nothing elſe.

What on retroſpect appears to me to be the capital weakneſs of man, is, that ſtrange aſcendant which his wiſhes have over his underſtanding: It is this makes a *Centaur*. How often have we looked on our wiſhes as infallible arguments for the certainty of what we deſired; when others ſaw it was an impoſſible point? And of this capital weakneſs, a capital inſtance is, that dying men can ſcarce believe that they ſhall die. Are we not now as thoſe yellow autumn leaves, which the firſt blaſt ſweeps away? Yet we ſeem to think the green bud hardly more tenacious of the ſtem.

On farther review, *this* is ſtranger ſtill: Our friends are our ſtrongeſt ties to life: When theſe are cut, what but folly can renew the charm? What re-engage

our diſenchanted hearts? and what, in my retroſpect, is an object more obvious, or ſtriking, than yonder enſigns of death? How the tyrant triumphs! What numerous monuments riſe over the cold boſoms that once warmly received us! That ſhared our councils, our ambitions, our pleaſures, and our hearts? Their epitaphs collected would make a volume: A volume how inſtructive, if read aright? A friend's monument is a friend's legacy; and a richer to the conſiderate, than any parchment can convey. What, for the moſt part, is human wiſdom, but the melancholy growth of a bleeding heart? The thought of death is the directing helm of life, and he beſpeaks a wreck, who lays it aſide.

O my friend! how rapid the human march? Men are in haſte; how they hurry over the ſtage? Where are thoſe luminaries in every various walk of fame, in every kind of excellence, and renown, who moſt fired our ambition, and provoked our envy? Are they not paſſed away as *April* ſhadows over the field; or, by the fire-ſide, a winter's tale? Are not thoſe far-ſeen, ſhining lights gone out apace after one another, as little ſparks in the fired leaf, or paper, leaving us nothing but aſhes behind? And in their aſhes is there nothing to be found but ſorrow? May we not light on a little prudence in them?

Sorrow, indeed, predominates. Oh, recent wound! Sorrow how juſt! Whom loſt we the very laſt moon? —Loſt *we?* That is vainly ſaid: Whom loſt the public? Whom the whole nation? Few have left it more worthy all love, and eſteem, than our friend deceaſed*. He

* Sir J. S.

He was made by nature to be beloved; and intitled by virtue to be admired.

——*Quem ſemper amatum,*
Semper honoratum, ſic Dii voluiſtis, habebo. VIRG.

Well had it been, if we, like him, had ſought *eſteem*; but we would not pay the price. *Love* we thought would come cheaper; and ſeeking that, were in danger of loſing both. The wiſe world will part with nothing, but by force. Love cannot be compelled, eſteem may. And, when it is, we lay in it, at the ſame time, the ſureſt foundation for laſting love.

My retroſpect ſhews me a *tranſitory* love of which we have been too fond. A love often beſtowed by great ones, on thoſe whom they cannot eſteem. This love, ſuppoſing it ſterling, I *(ſtultus ego!)* returned in kind: But I do not repent it. I may not repent of my virtue: For, my friend! there are two ſorts of charity in the world, and which the greateſt, is hard to ſay. We are bound in compaſſion to help the poor to *live*, and the rich to *enjoy*; who feel a pain peculiar to themſelves, that of being mocked by abundance, which denies them their expected happineſs; happineſs in proportion to their purſe. All I learn from ſuch *ardent* lovers (for ſuch generally they are) is, that it is dangerous to dip into moſt men below the ſurface, leſt our curioſity ſhould rob us of our good opinion of them Much decorum, little homage, is requiſite. My whole life tells me, that a juſt demand for *eſteem* is ſacred, but rare. We may well afford to pay it, when it is *due*: Nor muſt our *love* be with-held, where it is *not*. Univerſal love enjoined, is deſigned

as an antidote against reciprocal contempt; and as a diſcipline to human pride, which muſt ſtoop to love men in their infirmities and *faults:* Nor is it more our duty, than our prudence; how elſe could we hope quarter for our *own;* which both tell us of others faults, and bid us forgive them. For many of them we ſhould not ſuſpect, but from the whiſpers of their parallels in our own boſoms. And therefore, by not forgiving them, we condemn ourſelves. If, then, we would be forgiven by ourſelves, or others, we muſt forgive. A truth for which I thank my preſent Review.

What I like leaſt in this ſurvey, for fear it ſhould prove our own caſe, is *this;* I find old men apt to think well of themſelves, not becauſe they fly vice, but becauſe vice is fled; repute themſelves virtuous, becauſe free from boys offences; ſet down impotence for victory; and triumph, becauſe they have not fought, becauſe they meet no foe. And what makes me even tremble, is, I ſee ſome, who blameleſs in youth, are overtaken by folly when in years, and (of all ſights the moſt deplorable!) I ſee them dragged by their white beards into the fouleſt enormities. Faults which are the natural growth of the diſtinct periods of life, may meet with ſome toleration: But the monſtrous growth of vices out of ſeaſon no man ſpares: Becauſe the hot-beds of *Lucifer* only can raiſe crimes, in which *nature* has no hand.

Heaven avert from us ſuch an end! for, far from blameleſs was our beginning. In our early days (called the days of innocence), we had our little villanies; our vice in miniature: As years and temptations

tions increaſed in years leſs ripe, than in iniquity, we were no petty criminals, before we were men. We wiſhed, indeed, for wiſdom; but what wiſdom would have avoided, we made our favourite choice; what wiſdom would have choſen, we bid wait till to-morrow. Frequent were our quarrels with our faults; but rarely puſhed on to a parting. Pleaſure had its charms, and virtue its efforts; and ſometimes, in a paſſion, threw its rider. But triumphs of paſſion are but ſhort. No rebukes are ſo powerful as thoſe from our own conduct. Affords not this, then, a ſtrong caution for the future? The diſtempers of the paſt periods of our lives are the beſt antidotes for thoſe to come.

Retroſpection informs me, It was, *now*, open war with our enemy; *now*, perfect peace: How eaſy ſin ſat on our hearts; and called itſelf ſpirit, wiſdom, any thing but what it was? When ſome merciful diſcipline awaked us from our trance, we fought; and we conquered: But what was our conqueſt? Such as rather marred our wrong enjoyments, than wedded us cloſely to the right. We *called* the right our beloved, our ſpouſe; but often committed adultery againſt it; thus loſing the joys both of the ſinner, and the ſaint: So motley a creature is man; as mutable as God is fixed. Ours, indeed, was no uncommon caſe: But others faults are not our abſolution. An abſolution it is, however, with which many are content: Tho' his Holineſs could ſcarce give his ſaints one more ineffectual and vain.

Who is he, my dear friend, that can abſolve us, or condemn?——Look through thy whole paſt life, and anſwer.

anſwer. What year, nay, what day, has paſſed unimpowered to vouch for *his* clement, and abſolute reign! See I not, in numberleſs inſtances, the naked hand of Providence ſtretched out, as it were, on this ſide the clouds, pointing us to good? Now, ſhewing how little this world can give, by pouring on us the full enjoyment of it; to turn our hearts on a better. Now, ſhewing us, by the calamities of others, how much we may ſuffer in this world; to keep us in awe, though ourſelves were unhurt. Now, breaking to pieces all our own ſchemes, and raiſing our happineſs out of their ruins; to teach us humility, gratitude, and on whom to rely; ſhewing us, that moſt of our triumphs are errors; and our diſappointments, eſcapes. Now bringing us, when moſt ſecure, to the brink of the grave; to repreſs preſumption. Now ſnatching us from it, when paſt all human help; to kindle devotion, and forbid the pain of deſpair. Now defeating us in ſpite of all our wiſdom; now bleſſing us in ſpite of all our folly: bleſſing, to ſweeten life; the contrary, to wean us from it; and thus in both worlds to provide for our welfare, as far as the nature of humanity will admit.

What a glorious image of Divine goodneſs is this? The wiſeſt cannot pay half its due in their higheſt opinion, nor the beſt in their profoundeſt acknowlegement, of it. And can we not ſhew as inglorious a portrait of human *weakneſs* in ourſelves? How are our two different paths of life equally ſtrewed over with follies? with follies thick as autumn leaves! but not thick enough to hide our faults: So numerous both that I am quite diſinclined to look longer backward; and haſten, for refuge, into ſome change of thought.

thought. And here, ſhall only add, that man overlooks the moſt inſtructive book in his ſtudy, if he reads not himſelf.

And now, I fear, you will ſay, that how *uſeful*, and *natural*, ſoever Life's Review may be, yet you can find but little pleaſure in it. In it there is no pleaſure to be found, but what has coſt us ſome pain; but what we have fought our way to, through nature's perverſe byaſs, and beſieging temptations. Unbought pleaſure is not the growth of earth: This is a militant ſtate; nor muſt man unbuckle his armour, till he puts on his ſhroud: For the moſt victorious veteran may meet with a defeat. Nothing in Life's Review can give delight, but what we may call our trophies, or ſpoils taken in war. All elſe is vaniſhed as a dream.

What have I ſaid? vaniſhed as a dream!—Would to God it was! 'tis *not!* Far from it! Every moment is immortal! Every moment ſhall return, and lay its whole freight, nothing loſt, its every whiſper, every thought, before the Throne: The Throne of him who ſent it to man on that commiſſion; and commands it back, at the ſtated day, to make its report; to be regiſtered in eternity, for the peruſal of angels, and the juſtification of their King. Tell our gay triflers, that there is no ſuch thing as a trifle upon earth. Can any thing be a trifle, that has an effect eternal? Tell them, though they are ſo well aſſured, that there is nothing ſerious upon earth, that *time*, to man, is, in ſome reſpects, a more ſerious ſeaſon than eternity: That *his* eternity is abſolutely the creature of time: That 'tis foul, or fair, rejoices, or laments, as time,

omnipotent

omnipotent time! (that trifle which they throw away) ordains its fate. If they doubt it, let them aſk their jovial companion, who died of *their* happineſs laſt night.

Many, my friend! have made a worſe, many a better, uſe of time than we have done. Many have been more criminal; many more innocent. But moſt men imagine that innocent, which has a *negative* guilt. An idle day is a guilty day, in a life ſo ſhort and precarious; with more than human thought can carry, incumbent on it. There are not more ſpots in the ſun than in the life of a ſaint.

What then are we?—O my friend! at half a glance through life, I perceive, that, though we have made a ſhift to creep out of the *Augean ſtable*, yet have we not ſcaled the temple of virtue: though we made the choice of *Hercules*, yet we wanted his ſtrength: though we, ſometimes, lopped one head of the *Hydra*; yet, too often, ſeven ſhot up in its ſtead. Whereas, on the contrary, they that have been long toſſed by folly, when once landed on a good life, ſhould *burn their ſhips*; as *Cæſar* once burnt thoſe of his legions on the *Britiſh* coaſt: I mean, that the warmeſt reſolution ſhould deſtroy the very deſire of embarking in ill; and ſo render a return impracticable.

Such, then, being our feeble attempts, ſo ſlender our pretence to wiſdom, it becomes us to give thoſe, whom we have ſo freely treated, their revenge. To confeſs, that, though we are not quite *horizontals*, yet neither are we quite *upright*; and, though we have ſet up for reformers, yet we are not, altogether, men.

A

A *man*, my friend! is a glorious being; a great rarity; there are but few to be found. A *man* is an exalted character, doubly great; he is an hero, and a king. Few kings are so great, as to reign over their own hearts. Few heroes so victorious, as to drive *dominions*, *principalities*, and *powers*, before them. Both these meet in a *real man*: He ranks, in *reality*, but a little lower than the angels: nor long, so low.——O friend! man is a wonderful being! Anon, I will tell thee what thou art; and (mark what I say), I will surprize thee with thyself.

At present, only this.—Dare we say, that we are arrived at the character I have mentioned? No. Dare we say, it was not in our power? No.—Why then this cowardice in a *possible* hero? Why this disloyalty to himself, in a *possible* king? Whence this reproach to reason and immortality? Whence this inglorious, and absolute desertion from our godlike selves? Sounds that too high?—In whose image were we made? I foresee your objection; I grant that image is impaired: but I quit not my point; I dare affirm, that beings which are free, rational, and immortal, may be gods in due time, through Divine Grace, if they please.

How deplorable our distance from it? Whence this *unmanly* defect? Know we not that, unless our conduct is that of a man, it had been better for us, if a lower species had fallen our lot? Why were we called into being? What we have enjoyed already poorly pays our mothers pain, and our own. Wouldst thou repeat thy part in the comedy? act it o'er again? Wouldst thou be rejumbled in this rough *Thespian* cart, dragged by those two skeletons, half-starv'd *hope*, and panting *expectation*,

pectation, through bad roads, *now* worſe and worſe, and thy fellow-ſtrollers in a conſtant conſpiracy againſt both thy pay, and thy applauſe; how well ſoever thy part is performed; how great ſoever thy indulgence is to them?—Thou wouldſt not. Here and there, indeed, we might pick up a lucky hour, *alboque notanda lapillo*, that might make us ſmile again. But nature, and indeed reaſon, ſtarts back at the whole. If we ſhould find a ſmall pearl in one oyſter of a million, it would hardly make us fiſhers for life.

Wouldſt thou, then, ceaſe to be?—No, nature ſhudders at it. That horn of the alternative wounds more than the former: If ſo, our wiſhes, as well as our nature, puſh us into eternity. And ſhall we *fear*, what we *wiſh*? Fear it we muſt, unleſs we provide a good reception there. We have provided for to-morrow, and to-morrow was not ſatisfied. If we provide for eternity, our ſatisfaction will be full. We have provided for many years; for more than we ſhall ever ſee; but not for thoſe which will never end.

How great the diſhonour, my dear fellow criminal! in us, who were not blind to the grand futurity, were not cold to the divine rewards; to let the glowing thoughts of immortality ſo far mingle with the dregs of ſenſe? Is not this, with the wings of an eagle, to drop into the mire? *There* lies the *pleaſure* of which the world is ſo fond; that bane of private property, that preſage of public ſlavery, that ſure annihilation of a rational creature, and as ſure a creation of a wretch eternal. *Pleaſure* has robbed earth of more lives, and heaven of more ſouls, than the body collective of all other evils diſcharging their whole quivers on man.

Our-

Our weakneſs, and our ſecurity under the conſequences of it, is no uncommon caſe. Bluſhing I look round for its fatal cauſe. And do I not find it, where, if found, it muſt increaſe my confuſion? Do I not find it in the *great goodneſs* of God? If ſo, how muſt that reproach and brand the deep ingratitude of man? And, I think, I find it there.

The GENERAL CAUSE of SECURITY in SIN.

FOR, conſider, my good friend! what can he do that ventures to continue in ſin? He cannot defy the wrath Divine; that is not in man. He cannot acquieſce under the terror of its conſequence; he muſt therefore preſume on Divine mercy. "I know myſelf "worthleſs, yet earth pours its bleſſings. I know "myſelf worthleſs, yet heaven buys me with its blood. "What is to be feared, what is not to be hoped, from "*ſuch* a God? Be my crimes what they will, ſome yet "unrevealed expedient will be found for my ſafety. "For *God is Love*" Thus, poſſibly, he may reaſon: and thus, at once, do two ſtrange things: cite Scripture to his ruin, and make the mercies of God fatal to man.

God, indeed, is love: but ſhall man therefore be a monſter? And a monſter in the judgment of all men? All confeſs that there is an admirable conſent between the precepts of virtue, andthe ſentiments of our common reaſon. All confeſs, that virtue receives a conſtant approbation from the uniform verdict of our conſciences. All confeſs, that virtue practiſed brings in the

the greateſt happineſs to ſociety: He, therefore, that is not virtuous, can give himſelf no ſatisfactory account why he was born either with reaſon, or conſcience, or a deſire of happineſs: ſince he has nothing of what they all demand from him. And, therefore, he muſt appear an unaccountable being; that is a monſter, not only to others but himſelf.

This is more than enough to make vice our averſion, though God were love to that abſurd degree, which our folly may fancy, and which our vice moſt certainly wiſhes, and wants. But there is no *ſuch* love in Him: It is blaſphemous to ſuppoſe it. God *is* love, and therefore—what? That which many may leaſt expect—— therefore God is *terrible:* From whence ariſes his marvellous love to man? Of man He has no need; the Divine happineſs is complete: in man He ſees no merit; He knows we are worthleſs, as well as we ourſelves; But then, far better than we, He knows that we are—*immortal.* That therefore (moſt intereſting, and moſt alarming thought!) that therefore, we *muſt* ſuffer, or enjoy, for ever!

Hence, be moſt aſſured, my friend! his regard for man. Hence, for a worm, to-day crawling out of the earth; and to-morrow, more deſpicably ſtill, crawling into corruption; his compaſſion, his ſolicitude, his councils held on high; and all the wonders of his love. Wonders?—much more than wonders to man; they are wonders in heaven! They ſtrike with amazement the firſt angels of light.

Conſcious of thy own meanneſs, canſt thou ſcarce believe that Divine indulgence ſhould thus abound? Conſider:

Conſider: God, indeed, called us out of the *duſt*. But He called us into an *eternity*: An eternity, henceforward, commenſurate with his own: And ſhall not his concern be commenſure in degree, bear a proportion to his gift? Shall not one ſhew as much of the Great God as the other? As he has made us *immortal*; He has made us alſo *endangered*, creatures. Creatures that muſt, neceſſarily, ſtand the moſt important, and incomprehenſible conſequence of their own doubtful conduct for ever. Does not this abate thy ſurprize at ſuch abundant indulgence? It muſt, if *God is love*, and vouchſafes to look on us in the mentioned light. In that light He looks on us. Thence his more than paternal bowels of compaſſion for the moſt unworthy of men. Thence his omnipotence exerted in giving proofs of his love.

But why, ſayeſt thou, is this love *terrible?* Is not that love *moſt* terrible which tells us we are in danger of being eternally undone? And *this* love tells us ſo; for (as I conceive) it never had exiſted, had not that been our caſe.

How deep then, and deplorable, is their miſtake, who preſume to ſin, becauſe God is ſo good; when God is ſo good purely becauſe he knows that preſumption will be their ruin? Who preſume on impunity for ſin, becauſe God is ſo good; when God is ſo good, purely becauſe He knows that ſin, and impunity, are incompatible? Such men make a demonſtration of their danger, the baſis of their ſecurity; and fear nothing, becauſe an Omnipotence, that is ſollicitous for their welfare, gives proof that He is apprehenſive of their deſtruction.

Such

Such men reaſon ill. Still worſe, experience cannot convince them. What their experience of every day, every hour, proves to be true, they will not believe: They *doubt*, if they ſhall be (not to uſe a harſher word) condemned for their ſins. Yet they *know* that they ſhall die. Now, as I take it, their death is a prelude, and aſſurance, of their future condemnation: for, if beings, originally immortal, die for another's ſin, can it be doubted, but that they ſhall be condemned for their own? And that death (which is a demonſtration that ſin ſhall not eſcape unpuniſhed) is unavoidable, they are convinced by their *ſenſes*: Unleſs our Centaurs, therefore, lay aſide their ſenſes, as well as their reaſon, for the future they muſt forego vain hopes, too frequent, and too ſanguine, among them: nor longer turn a proof of immortality into a preſumption on impunity; Heaven's indulgence, into deſtruction; and gather poiſon from the tree of life.

I know not, my friend! if others have urged theſe arguments, with regard to the cauſe of God's great indulgence to man, and the certainty of puniſhment for ſin; but to me they appear of a very weighty and affecting nature. There are ſome truths of the laſt moment to men, which, at firſt aſpect, have ſomewhat ſurpriſing in them: they require, and well deſerve, our ſecond thoughts.

I will give you two; one from Scripture; one from my own thoughts: "*With the Lord there is mercy*, there-
" fore *ſhall He be feared.—With man there is immorta-*
" *lity*, therefore *ſhall He tremble.*"—Tremble at himſelf! Tremble at his own power, which can give what colour he will to a whole eternity. Tremble at his

own

own glory; that he has angels for his guard; and an Almighty for his friend. Yes, tremble at all that might incline him to triumph: for theſe grandeurs, that inſpire preſumption, increaſe danger: are magnificent aſſurances that he may be plunged beyond hope; be loſt paſt retrieve.

God, indeed, forbids our deſpair: but not becauſe his love will ſave us in our ſins; but becauſe deſpair ſtops all effort at amendment; and without it his love deſires our welfare in vain. His love is ſuch, as to give us encouragement, and ſupport, in every thing, but ſin: ſuch as to ſupport our ſpirits amid the ruins of a falling world; but not under the cloud of one unrepented guilt.

This flings light on a part of Scripture, which has a cloud on it in ſome eyes; and with others quite ruins its credit: *Work out your ſalvation with fear, and trembling:* A ſtrange text to thoſe, who fear and tremble at nothing ſo much as at a diſappointment in their luſts. Our ſalvation muſt be *worked out:* Wiſhing, and willing, will not bring it; hoping, and confiding, will not procure it; it will not come by chance; no, nor by gift, and infuſion. It muſt be worked out with *fear;* becauſe fear is the ſtrongeſt guard of diligence, without which, this work cannot go on; and with *trembling*, leſt we ſhould fail in this important work; leſt we ſhould think too lightly of the Divine juſtice; and leſt our very confidence ſhould betray us, even though we were good men: for good men have failed purely from a good opinion of their own ſtate. For a good opinion begets ſecurity; ſecurity begets negligence; and negligence temptation; and temptation,

a fall: and (if unrepented) a fall into that ſtate, where our *firſt* wiſh will be, that we never had been born; and (worſe ſtill!) where there is no *laſt*. Pain is ſometimes ſo great even *here*, that we loſe our ſenſes; *there* it will be far greater; and (how terrible to ſay!) our ſenſes will *not* be loſt.

THOUGHTS for AGE.

ON the bank of that ſtate we, *now*, ſtand: That poſt of wiſdom, if ever men are wiſe; which is the reaſon why they wiſh it may be long before they arrive at it: for folly is the favourite of mankind: And is it not *our own?* Though there we ſtand, we ſcarce believe it; ſo much our wiſhes obſtruct our belief: or, believing, ſcarce know what being *there* means; ſo much familiarity takes away our attention; and robs things of their power to ſtrike ſtrong on our minds. *Eternity* has ſo often paſſed our lips, that it has forgot its way to our hearts. Did it enter there, would it not extinguiſh every earth-born paſſion in them? Yes; as the ſun, the ſmalleſt ſpark of fire.

Though we ſtand on its awful brink, ſuch our leaden byaſs to the world, we turn our faces the wrong way; we are ſtill looking on our old acquaintance, *time*; tho' *now*, ſo waſted and reduced, that we can ſee little more of him than his *wings* and his *ſcythe*: our age enlarges his wings to our imagination; and our fear of death, his ſcythe; as *time* himſelf grows leſs. His conſumption is deep: his annihilation is at hand.

Should we not then turn us round, and look on eternity?

eternity? That glorious home of all that ſurvives, and outſhines the ſun; that kingdom of ſouls immortal! Of immortal ſouls, *time* is only the maturing womb; from eternity they wait their *real* birth. Are we, my friend! matured? Or ſhall we prove abortive to the world of glory? If we were mature, why tarry here ſo long? By protracting life, Heaven ſhews not its favour to thoſe that are fit to die. Is not, the buſineſs of our day undone, the cauſe why we are ſuffered to ſit up ſo late? To be ſo long on our weary legs, after the common hour of human reſt? I fear it is. I much fear we are permitted to live, purely becauſe—we do not deſerve it.

Is it not, (my languid fellow-traveller in the deep vale of years) high time to be wiſer? leſt the greateſt of curſes ſhould fall on us, that of being wiſe too late: Which is the moſt emphatical definition of a fool. The world is worn out to us; and we are worn out to the world. The world, which knows its own intereſt, quits us, as rats a ruined houſe; if we knew *ours*, ſhould we not quit the world, as bees an exhauſted flower? We can make no more honey of it! its ſweets are gone. Where are its formerly ſweet deluſions, its airy caſtles, and glittering ſpires? Are we not left on a lonely, barren, briery heath, to grope out our weary way, through the duſk of life, to our final home? Shall not the diſſolved enchantment ſet the captive free? Are we *Torriſmonds* or *Sudburys?* Shall our dotage rivet our chains, when kind nature would knock them off? To ſpeak a language even Centaurs may underſtand, "A laſt card, well played, may yet win "the game!"

Conſider, are we ſcheming ſtill? Stretching out a trembling hand, which wants to be ſupported, to graſp at the nothing that comes next? Any thing now gained would rather mock, than enrich us; can any thing enrich, that cannot be enjoyed? Graſp at new *faculties*, and new *powers*, if thou canſt find them, or new objects will only laugh us to ſcorn. But hadſt thou even *thoſe*, if the value of things is in proportion to our term in them, their price at our market ſhould fall very low.

It is a good thing to know when we have *all*, and to laugh at that cheat *more*, which is ever ſtealing our hearts. But it is as uncommon, as good. Hence, ſeniors are milking the world after it is dry. Is it not a ſhame that we ſhould be gleaning ſublunary *ſtraws*, when our harveſt of life is over? hoping an after-crop in our ſtubble? Though called to diadems, where harveſt is perpetual; where an harveſt, more than golden, profuſely crowns an eternal year?

As to the paſs which is ſo much feared; the dark, ſubterranean entry to future life; into which our weak imagination peeps, and ſtarts back, as a child at a ſhadow; all thanks to the bleſſed Goſpel, we know what will light us up a lamp in it, and leſſen its formidable gloom. I have ſeen a death-bed, the reverſe of poor *Altamont*'s, where the by-ſtanders were the greateſt ſufferers; and the king of terrors, by chriſtian patience, was over-matched. The power of religion ſhone out without a veil; nor could any riſing ſuſpicions of hypocriſy dim its luſtre. In ſuch ſcenes as theſe the human heart is no longer inviſible to man; and a glimpſe of heaven is diſcovered in ſuch a ſight.

We

We know what can make us ſleep ſweetly in the duſt: what can ſmooth the rough tranſition; ſoften death into a ſort of tranſlation, which interrupts not (bleſſed be God!) our exiſtence; nor our peace. In peace have many died; and, therefore, it is certain, all *may*. The whole ſecret for obtaining that peace is an abſolute reſignation to the moſt High; which (as hard a taſk as it ſeems to ſome) at the bottom is no more than owning him to be God. And a contrary conduct (as little as it is conſidered) has atheiſm, partial atheiſm, in it. It is queſtioning ſome of his attributes, though not denying a God. May that peace be thine! My heart beats with ardor for thy preſent peace, and future bliſs. May I ſhare it with thee! What a poor broken embrace, what a ſad fragment of friendſhip, is that which ends at the grave? Such a tranſitory tie gives a ſecond dart to death; and a double diſſolution to departing man. That of ſoul and body ſcarce more ſevere.

Would to heaven! that all friendſhips were, *evidently*, friendſhips of immortal men. Such, I mean, as gave proof of their having each other's *eternal* intereſts at heart. Modern, at leaſt, faſhionable, friendſhip flows from a polluted ſource; it taſtes too ſtrong of earth; without the leaſt tincture of *man* (as above deſcribed); without the leaſt ſpirit of *immortality* in it. Nay, worſe; it often ſprings from cauſes that will not bear the light: and reſembles the dark ſtreams of *Alpheus*, and *Arethuſa*, that mingle under ground: it ſhould rather reſemble *Eridanus*, which is ſaid to flow from heaven.

How many have we of theſe ſubterranean attach-

ments? What is it ties our Centaurs together in ſo long a *ſtring*?—Leaping together the ſame barriers of the decent, and the juſt; ranging the ſame forbidden grounds; gorging at the ſame manger; neighing the ſame inflammatory tune; or being daily rid, and ſorely galled, by the domineering inſolence of the ſame inflamed miſtreſs.

Since ſuch their accompliſhments, I hope to levy a *Lapithean* infantry ſufficient ſucceſsfully to carry on the war now opened againſt them.—As *Chiron* blew the trumpet which called the *Greeks* to the ſiege of *Troy*; I hear there is a modern *Chiron*, who ſounds as many inſtruments, as *Nebuchadnezzar* did to ſummon his idolaters; and that he raiſes forces, and ceaſes not to carry on the war, at a *vaſt expence*. Doubtleſs he was typified of old by him who is ſaid in *Virgil*;

Ære *ciere viros*, *martemque accendere* cantu.

For my own part, my friend! I fancy my campaign will ſoon be over. I have frequent pains; and, I think I hear the maſter call. If ſo, ſhould we not leave this world, though not yet admitted to the next? Have we not been, through life, anxiouſly providing one year for the next? And ſhall we grudge to pay half that pains for an eternity?

Conſider, my *immortal* friend! ſhould we not leave the world, before the world leaves us? It is diſmal to be left. There is a noble abſence from earth, while we are yet on it. There is a noble intimacy with heaven, while we are yet beneath it. If our affection

flies

flies thither, we ſhall be welcomed by ſuperior beings, and not be miſſed by men who delight in novelties; or, if miſſed, admired the more for being *once* in the right. They muſt be ſomewhat out of this world, who would be deep in the concerns of the next; and is it not time we ſhould be ſo? Till the buſineſs of life (as it is called) is over, its *real* buſineſs is rarely begun: nor always then. Age is apt to carry its allowed title to repoſe too far: age is the moſt buſy period of human life. But its tranſactions are not with men. Therefore that abſence above-mentioned is moſt fit for us. It is a ſort of a third ſtate between this world and the next. How proper then, for the reception of thoſe, whoſe term is out, here, according to the common age of man.

And can it be hard for us to lay this world aſide, ſince they that have fared beſt in the world, have only the feweſt objections againſt it? Is it not an old tragic comedy read over and over, which by no means,

——*Decies repetita placebit?* JUV.

To ſpeak in the licentious ſtile of comedy, man is a mule, of mixed origin, of heaven and earth: earth has had more than its ſhare of us; give heaven the reſt: and that for a *double* reaſon. All know that hope is life's cordial: it works miracles; without happineſs it makes men happy. What have been all the pleaſures of our former years, but joyous prophecies, and bold promiſes, in the name of to-morrow? Worldly *hope* in age expires. If he provides not another hope, a man of years, and a man of miſery, mean the ſame thing. Therefore the ſame ſteps are to be taken,

whether we would ſweeten the remaining dreg of life, or provide a triumph for eternity.

The worldly wiſhes, which an old man ſends out, are like *Noah*'s dove; they cannot find whereon to light, and muſt return to his own heart again for reſt. His natural, and, perhaps, moſt allowable and proper wiſh is for reſpect. But reſpect for age is a *virtue*. I need ſay no more to convince him, how little of it he muſt expect: and, indeed, he but ill deſerves it from others, who, by doating on the world, denies it to himſelf.

When infirmity drives the world from us, or diſeaſe confines us to our chamber, ſhall we not be all alone with the great Father of ſpirits, and ſearcher of hearts? Is it not worth while a little before-hand to practiſe our leſſon, that we may be the better prepared to ſuſtain ſuch an interview? Our wiſdom cannot add to the days, but it can lighten the burden, of life; and leſſen the terrors of death. Death forgot in youth is folly; in age, madneſs. With regard to that king of terrors, how many in years *borrow* the ſecurity of youth; for it is impoſſible it ſhould belong to them. Happy they! whom death, when he comes, ſhall find at home; his viſit will have leſs of terror in it. Out of pure decency to the dignity of human nature, of which the decays and imperfections ſhould not be expoſed, men in years, by receſs, ſhould fling a veil over them, and to the world be a little buried, before they are interred. An old man's too great familiarity with the public is an indignity to the human nature, and neglect of the Divine. A greater intercourſe with it than the calls of duty and virtue demand,

demand, is indecent, irreligious, and contemptible; ſpeaking acquieſcence in contempt, dotage on the world, and oblivion of eternity. His fancying himſelf to be ſtill properly one of this world, and on a common foot with the reſt of mankind, is, as if a man getting drunk in the morning, after a long nap, lifting his drowſy lids at ſun-ſet, ſhould take it for break of day.

But grant him to be ſtill of this world; grant him all it can give; what is this world, but a machine played on by us by our *great enemy* for the diſſipation of human thought, whoſe ſcattered rays muſt be collected, as it were, to a focal point, in order to duly warm our devotion; and ſet a pious heart on fire? And can any happineſs ſubſiſt in age without piety? Impoſſible! Its intimacy with the world, is not for the pleaſures it can give; they are paſt: it is purely to diſlodge the thoughts of death, which intrude at that ſeaſon; that is, it is purely to decline the pleaſures of heaven.

Why, my friend! is our day of trial extended beyond the expiration of the common term? Is it not indulged to the great need our paſt conduct has of it? And ſhall our folly reverſe the kind intention of that Divine indulgence to us? Shall it ſet us farther from our God? I am never ſo ſtrongly ſtruck with the weakneſs and depravity of man, as when I ſee grey hairs playing the fool. Hope, which in other evil appearances ſupports our ſpirits, fails us there. What can ſhock common ſenſe, what can create amazement, if not the failings that would diſhonour youth, in thoſe that are miraculouſly alive after the ſtated pe-

riod of human life? This is an outrage to reaſon, beyond the boldneſs of the deſperado that confounds us moſt; this out-dares the felon repeating his crime, not only under the gallows, but with the cord about his neck. Where is that world into which you and I were born? It is under-ground; and a generation of ſtrangers are dancing over our coevals long ſince in the duſt. Where is that world into which we *ſhall* be born? Far, far above the ſun, if, while *we* are beneath it, we behave ourſelves like men. But if this life was our only concern, conſider, that nothing but being wiſer, that is better, than thoſe born after us, can poſſibly reſcue the decays of age from averſion and contempt.

Fain would I have my pen of ſome ſervice to the aged, now my neareſt relations, thoſe of blood, are no more. To the former am I related by like date, duty, intereſt, and above all,

——*Nunc ipſa pericula jungent.* Ov.

Sill eager in worldly purſuits, warm in the chace of ſhadows, ſhall we ruſh, as down a precipice, and leap plumb into the jaws of *extempore* death?

No, let us halt in our career; pauſe on the brink; and provide for our eternal peace. Can I better expreſs my love than by preſſing it on thee? I preſs it ſtrongly. And know, my friend! that Heaven, and (as I have ſhewed thee) a moſt indulgent Heaven, joins my pathetic wiſh; and angels, ardent angels, ſay Amen. And what want they? (mark it well), they want nothing but thy *own* concurrence to crown their wiſhes for thy welfare.

Dear Sir,

Yours.

LET-

LETTER VI.

The DIGNITY of MAN.

The CENTAURS RESTORATION to HUMANITY.

The DIGNITY of MAN Resumed.

The CONCLUSION.

LETTER VI.

The DIGNITY of MAN.

HERE, Sir, I enter on that elevated theme, *The Dignity of Man.*

Major rerum mihi naſcitur ordo. VIRG.

I ſhall ſcale the ſummit of human nature, and ſet its dignity in the ſtrongeſt light; that the contraſt may ſtrike our Centaurs with a juſt ſenſe of their own ghaſtly condition; and more clearly demonſtrate the depth of their fall. Many are for degrading their nature, that they may leſſen its duties; and for looking on themſelves as beings inſignificant, that they may be profligate beings with a better grace; and (as they would flatter themſelves) with more excuſe. They run voluntarily into this error, as men run into the dark, that they may ſin without a bluſh; framing a lie (which is the common caſe) for their apology. Their maſter *Epicurus* meant much the ſame, by ſetting the gods at ſuch a diſtance; and for their repoſe, exempting them

from the trouble of inſpecting the trifles of men. A due ſenſe of the grandeur of man's nature, and deſtination, is his beſt bulwark againſt the frequent and violent aſſaults temptation makes on him. This is a ſubject which I wiſh had been taken into better hands. For, as it demands all the powers of the nobleſt pen to reach its heights; ſo the world ſtands in need of having this, above all other, preſſed home on their hearts; for all other of any great moment are implied in it. There are but few, whoſe opinions do not too much widen the diſtance between an angel, and a man. I ſhall bring them nearer together, as the beſt means for the reformation of *Centaurs* (as you ſhall ſee) and for the moſt noble exaltation of *men*.

I have juſt now obſerved, that—"Angels want no-"thing but thy own concurrence to crown their wiſhes "for thy welfare."—This is true: Shall I not then be pardoned, if I preſume to put the ſame meaning into ſomewhat an higher ſtile, and ſay (with all reverence) that heaven's deſires are at thy mercy?—If ſo, think, and think again, What art thou? Thou poor, feeble, earth-born, mortal! What art thou?—Darts not on thee a ſtream of heavenly light? Doſt thou not ſee an amazing majeſty in man? Have I not then, made my bold promiſe good? Did I not, above, tell thee, I would *ſurprize* thee with thyſelf?

Nor can I reſt here. A man is almoſt more than man can conceive; a marvellous being that riſes above himſelf, darting rays of glory beyond the reach of his own ſight. My heart is tied to this endearing, tranſporting, and triumphant, theme.

Is

Is *thy* conſent neceſſary to finiſh what is begun, or rather, only deſigned, above? How ſtrangely this ſounds! Yet muſt I proceed in a ſtill higher ſtrain—In thee it is, (how ſeemingly bold, and impious ſo to ſpeak?) Yes, it is in thee, to grant, or deny, the requeſt of the Almighty.—And impious, indeed, it would be, if unauthorized by Scripture, in which that requeſt is made.

A requeſting Omnipotence:—What can ſtun, and confound thy reaſon more? What more can raviſh and exalt thy heart? It cannot but raviſh and exalt; it cannot but glorioufly diſturb, and perplex thee, to take in all *that* thought ſuggeſts. Thou child of the duſt! thou ſpeck of miſery and ſin! How abject thy weakneſs? How great is thy power? Thou crawler on earth, and, poſſible (I was about to ſay) controuler of the ſkies!.

Weigh, and weigh well, the wondrous *truths* I have in view: which cannot be weighed too much: which, the more they are weighed, amaze the more: which to have ſuppoſed, before they were revealed, would have been as great madneſs; and to have preſumed on, as great ſin, as it is now madneſs and ſin, *not* to believe. Such precious, and beatifying news is brought us by revelation; that revelation which is rejected, and deſpiſed, by thoſe that affect to be thought wiſer, and happier, than the reſt of mankind.

The *truths*, I mean, are implied in what follows; *viz.* Heaven intends, deſires, labours, works miracles, or more (if more can be), for thy welfare: it preſſes thee, it importunately preſſes thee, to comply. Conſider;

ſider; how art thou courted? And by whom? By Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; thy *fellow-labourers* for thy good. How is thy alliance ſought? And at what price? Angels, inſpecting, admiring angels, cannot compute its value. An extreme of love, an extreme of glory, this, which thoſe angels (if angels could envy) might envy to man: for was it not denied to them?

Thou younger, but darling ſon of heaven! wonder; tremble; triumph!—Yes, triumph; tremble; wonder; thy greateſt emotion falls ſhort of the mighty cauſe. Thou greatly beloved, greatly favoured, greatly deſtined, and, oh! greatly endangered! take heed to thy ſteps: nor leſs take fire at thy prize.

Art thou more exalted, or terrified at what I ſay? Exaltation and fear both riſe in extremes. With both paſſions comply; highly reverence thy *own* nature; more profoundly adore the *Divine*. Adore it with voice, heart, and life: and thus to glad all heaven, aſſert, reſcue, ennoble, and with bliſs eternal crown thyſelf: for without thee, in the conſtituted order of things, heaven is unable to do it. Its almighty hand is, as it were, tied up by its own decree. Without thee, thou amazing being! (pardoned be the word ſo bold) there is impotence in heaven. Nor is it bold when explained; for impotence when voluntary, is no impeachment of power.

Is all this *rapturous?*—Yes, ſuch a rapture, as nothing but groſs ignorance, or more fatal infidelity, can forbear. Is not rapture due for felicities inexpreſſible? And what felicity is ſo much as ſecond to this! It is the

the close, frequent, and feeling, inspection of these *interiora* of man's sublime condition, as *immortal*, and *redeemed*, that is the highest cordial of human joy; and the richest mine of human thought. A mine deep dug by few! and yet without it, man is not more a stranger to the natives of *Saturn*, than to himself. Without it, he must want the true, genuine, vital, spirit of a Christian. None without it can be filled with the light and comfort of the Holy Ghost. This, O ye Methodists! gives the real new birth: this enters man in quite another world. In his *former* world all things are absolutely changed: well nigh annihilated as to his wonted passion for them.

The heavens declare the glory of the Lord, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work. But the Christian *mine* I have mentioned, infinitely more demands our adoration and praise: infinitely more demands our exultation and joy. Are we transported, and justly transported, at the wonderful operations of nature, and decline we the contemplation of greater wonders in ourselves? And when the former but amuses an hour, the last blesses an eternity? In those stupendous views it is, that the mercy of God, and glory of man, at highest shine. Hence it is, that constant joy is enjoined to Christians as an absolute duty: a duty, on weaker motives, as absolutely impracticable.

You see, Sir, that to dive deep into man, is to dive into an ocean of Love Divine; which first drowns us in amazement, then lifts us into triumph: and at length, lands us (if we are wise) on eternal life. But too many swim only on the surface of our nature; like a feather, through their levity, incapable of sinking

ing to thoſe ſolid, and ſhining advantages, thoſe pearls of great price; thoſe great, awakening, and ſtrongly ſtimulating motives to virtue, that lie below. But I ſhall reſume *this ſubject* before I cloſe. What is already ſaid, is enough to produce that good effect which you will find in the marvellous ſcene, which, very ſoon, will open on you.

The CENTAURS RESTORATION to HUMANITY.

AT preſent, my friend! we muſt quit this conſecrated, for enchanted, ground; as you will ſoon, to your ſurprize and diſguſt, perceive. I know it is not to your taſte, nor, indeed, to my own. But *levity* has its uſe, when perverſe patients will refuſe what is ſalutary, if conveyed in any vehicle leſs agreeable to their vitiated taſte; and the grave reader, who nauſeates it, ſacrifices (through too great delicacy) to mere appearances, the ſubſtance of what is right.

Thou knoweſt that our Centaurs can ſcarce be perſuaded that they are not ſtill human creatures; tho' *mœchantur, ſcortantur, adulterantur, diabolantur* (I am forced to make words that are bad enough for them); and not ſo much as retain,

——*Veteris* veſtigia *formæ.* OV.

Are they not (to ſpeak with reverence in the language of the Prophet) as *fed horſes in the morning?* Do they not *aſſemble by troops in ladies houſes?* It is *harlot* in the original;

original; and ſo by us tranſlated. But that is not their only objection to the Scriptures. Perhaps, an old *Arabian* proverb may have greater authority with them. What ſays it? "Let him that would be ſafe, "avoid ſeven things; waſps, ſpiders, hyænas, croco- "diles, effs, adders, and *fine* women."

Here, then, I ſhall begin my exorciſm. Its words muſt be ſtrange and barbarous, ſuited to the occaſion. Let not your ear, my friend, be ſhocked; but liſten, and wait the event.

"MAY *Lais, Thais, Limax, Lupa, Succuba, Quadrantaria, Obolaria, Euriole, Sthenio, Meduſa, Erinnys, Megæra*, and *Tyſiphone*—*May* all theſe, and all "*ſuch* ladies, whether ſick or ſound, high or low, of "blood and title, or ditch and dunghill; natives, fo- "reign, or infernal—*May* this glorious group of *Torriſmond*'s angels, theſe gorgons, furies, harpies, "leaches, ſyrens, centaur-making ſyrens! paid, or "unpaid, keeping or kept, on fire or quenched; ge- "nevaed or citroned, in cloſet or cellar, in tavern, "bagnio, brothel, round-houſe, bridewell, or new- "gate.—Oh! *may* they ceaſe from this hour, to ſing "or dance, ſmile or frown, pleaſe or plague, pray or "ſwear, our Britiſh, unbritiſh youth, manhood, and "age, out of their ſenſes, health, eſtates, reputation, "human nature, and hopes of heaven!

"And, theſe enchantreſſes laying aſide their ſpells, "*may* the bewitched of *Great Britain* recover their "*priſtine* form, as *Circe*'s herd, at the prayer of *Ulyſſes*. At the touch of my diſinchanting pen, *may* "they leap out of their hides for joy; and laying hold

"on

" on their long-deſerted definition of man, *reaſon*, and " *two legs*, walk uprightly for the future."

Rejoice with me, my friend! For do I dream? or didſt thou not obſerve? Didſt thou not hear?—*Intonuit lævum.* As the dark cloud which cauſed it is vaniſhed, and a flood of light ruſhes in; ſo ſhall it fare with *them.* I ſee their dawning reaſon; I ſee the break of their moral day. And what I ſee, I ſhall relate; and what I relate, though ſtrange, let no man diſbelieve.

The Centaurs that can read, on peruſal of *The Dignity of Man*, are ſtung, as the *Trojan* horſe, when *Laocoon*'s ſpear pierced his ſide; and groan as deeply as that, when

Inſonuere cavæ, gemitumque dedere cavernæ. VIRG.

Moſt of them are much affected, but differently; being at laſt fully convinced that they are *not* men. One burns his *Bolingbroke;* another an indecent ſong: this calls in his bills, pleading privilege no more: that beſpeaks a pew againſt the next quarter: a third blames his delay; ſwears he will pray directly; falls on his knees, like *Cæſar*'s horſe,—riſes again, with a ſigh, and ſolemn vow, that he will be maſter of his *Paternoſter* before to-morrow: a fourth ſubſcribes all his gains by falſe dice to the Foundling Hoſpital: a fifth orders two little boys to ſchool immediately; and ſends ten guineas to their mothers in Bridewell: a ſixth, in a flame of pious zeal, damns a ſenſeleſs world; and undertakes, in leſs than a week, to demonſtrate that adultery is a crime. A ſeventh, &c.

But

But I muſt not triumph too much. I have not had equal ſucceſs with the female Centaurs. From a natural conſtancy of temper, and habitual averſion to change, they come but ſlowly into my wiſhes. But to make amends, when they come, they come with a vengeance, and overſhoot the mark. Mr. *W—ly* (whoſe converts ſome of them are) tells them, that they ſtand not upright, unleſs they lean a little backward; like a croſier, or like themſelves, when they coyly refuſe a ſalute: thus, though converted, they find not the ſtrait line, but ſtand ſtill a little bent—to the wrong.

Beſides, of my male converts, I have ſomewhat to complain: for ſome, though changed at heart, yet awed by faſhion, and vain of being ſtill *fine men*, are aſhamed to own it; and *appear* to be fools to ſave their credit. Theſe hypocrites in vice, theſe moral fops, ridiculouſly good, may be called *little* men in Centaurs ſkins; or coward virtue in maſquerade.

And worſt of all, of ſome Centaurs I am quite in deſpair. They fly my pen, and will not be *touched* for their diſtemper. But, being deep ſtung by worſe than the *Tarantula*, run mad for muſic, and dance themſelves to death. Others, with *Swift* (in that reſpect a Centaur himſelf) look on the noble quadrupede as ſuperior to the man. Others, on the contrary, approve, and heartily wiſh a *reſtoration* to humanity: but are careleſs, and indolent. They would, indeed, if a dæmon was not in poſſeſſion, they *would* be good. But will not be at the trouble of bringing a writ of *ejectment*, though *Sophronius* proffers to draw it up for them. The loweſt price of virtue is vigilance,

lance, and induſtry; and if it coſts us no more, it comes very cheap.

As for thoſe that are truly conſcious of their calamity, and heartily deſirous of an eſcape, mark the good effect of the leaſt tendency to goodneſs; the mighty change, a reſtoration of the human figure is actually begun. But the proceſs is gradual; nature advances, never leaps. They became not centaurs all at once.

Nemo repente fuit turpiſſimus. Juv.

As evil habits, which occaſioned their transformation, were gradually contracted, it is no wonder, that their recovery ſhould prove equally gradual, and ſlow. One ſheds a mane, another drops a tail; and appears only as too cloſely docked: ſome wonder to ſee ſlender fingers ſprouting through hoofs by their penitential tears, mollified into fleſh: ſome, like dancing dogs, continue upright ſome time; but tired of that unnatural reſtraint, drop into Centaurs for life. So dangerous in moral diſtempers, as well as natural, is a relapſe: ſome quite reſtored, yet ſtill retain ſo much of their former nature, that they are apt to trip, if a ſtrong temptation, like a ſtone, or cart-rut, lies acroſs their way: ſome can ſcarce believe their good fortune, and fear it is a dream. Others, too ſanguine, cry out, brother! to the firſt man they ſee; who ſtarts at his new relation, with a hide ſtill ſticking at his heels.

What a loud call do I hear among them for things ſtrange, and new? For dreſſes ſuited to the human ſhape; for pleaſures ſuited to the human mind; for bibles, prayer-books, debt-books; for virtuous conſorts,

ſorts, faithful friends, and fit objects of charity; for rational improvement and employments: no longer for Newmarket trappings; but for human ornaments. This, however, where the Reſtoration is complete. Poor *Sudbury* is ſtill awkwardly hopping on three legs; while others ſtand firmly planted on half four: one of whom, more learned than the reſt, cries out:

Πλέον ἥμισυ παντὸς. HES.

The reſt naturally take it for a pious thankſgiving, and give a loud Amen.

They that are quite recovered, arrayed in decent plain apparel, not dappled as the morning, with embroidery, or with lace all over liſted like the beautiful *Indian* aſs, call a council; and their firſt manly reſolution is to proclaim peace with the *Lapithæ*, or men of virtue; with whom, from time immemorial, the Centaurs have been at war. *Chiron* bent his bow againſt them: but of war various has been the fortune between them; till within this laſt half century, the Centaurs increaſing both in numbers and boldneſs, wearing frontlets of braſs on their foreheads, and *Horace*'s *Æs triplex* on their breaſts; and having of late a mighty giant at their head, whoſe quills, more fatal than the porcupine's, threatened a thouſand deaths at once, they began to dream of nothing leſs than victory complete. But the preſent re-inforcement of their enemies will turn the ſcale againſt them. I ſay re-inforcement; for the next ſtep my converts take, is to liſt into the *Lapithean* ſervice, determined to meet their

their late friends in no friendly ſort, under a banner with this motto,

Quid verum, atque decens, curo & rogo, & omnis in hoc ſum.

Which promiſes victory: for they are very formidable foes, who have had the fortitude firſt to conquer themſelves.

At the news of their revolt, offended *Torriſmond*, burning for revenge, cries, Ha, ha, ſnuffs the battle from afar.

Collectumque premens volvit ſub naribus ignem. VIR.

The glory of his noſtrils is terrible. And ſtill more abundantly his heroic choler riſes on hearing that their firſt deſtined enterprize is againſt *Bolingbroke*-caſtle; That delight of his eyes, and defiance of his foes: For he deems it impregnable; becauſe it is moated round with *Acheron*, and its aſpiring, proud battlements threaten heaven.

This caſtle was built out of the various ruins of many demoliſhed forts of infidelity, pompouſly put together, faced over with a material more ſhining than ſolid; and cemented with untempered mortar. *Sophronius* † heads the laudable enterprize. The caſtle is taken as was ancient *Babylon*. He firſt turns the general ſtream of the nation, by the force of ſtrong and ſolid eloquence, into a new channel, as *Cyrus* did the river *Euphrates*; then entering the caſtle, and finding

† An excellent writer in this controverſy, now in the preſs.

finding the garriſon turning things ſacred to prophane uſe, and drowned in debauch; obtains a ſudden and complete victory; but is a moſt merciful conqueror: For, inſtead of putting any to death, he only puts the moſt ſenſible of them out of countenance: And to their own darling delights, and boaſted glories, inſtead of the gallies, condemns them for life. Obliging them, however, in acknowledgment of his clemency, to wear yellow cockades impreſſed with theſe words, "*Be thou a Centaur ſtill!*" The bad man's choice includes his puniſhment.

The ſame *Sophronius*, adorned with his well-deſerved mural crown, reſcues the character of a late pious and learned prelate, which the Centaurs boaſted *Achilles*, (who,

Jura negat ſibi nata, nihil non arrogat,) HOR.

had dragged, like *Hector*'s body, round the town in the dirt: For the glory of *Britain*, and for the light and emulation of poſterity, I ſee it inſcribed on a column of adamant; with a *Bolingbroke couchant* emboſſed on the baſe; who now contributes to ſupport (as much as ſuch a feeble *Atlas* can) that celeſtial character, which he lately laboured to deſtroy; proud of his uncircumciſed *reaſon*; which reaſon, notwithſtanding, had evidently loſt its *authority* with himſelf: For when *that* is preſerved, ſenſe ſubmits to reaſon; and when ſenſe ſubmits to reaſon, reaſon ſubmits to the revealed word of God. And (ſince ſome are in love with words) I muſt obſerve, that reaſon ſtooped to revelation, is reaſon ſtill; only reaſon more reaſonable;

able; and its great hazard of error is all that it has loſt.

And now, my friend! what ſhall I ſay on this happy revolution? Shall I not out-boaſt *Auguſtus?* He ſaid of *Rome*, *Latericeam inveni, marmoream reliqui.* I, of *London*, *Inveni equinam, reliqui humanam.*

Nothing remains but to cleanſe the now-deſerted *ſtables*, and to render them fit for human uſe; and to perſuade the ſhe-grooms, who kept them, into ſome more decent, and leſs diabolical, courſe of life; eſpecially my patroneſs; who for the honour (as ſhe calls it) of my Dedication, has promiſed to give into my ſuperſtition; and to play fair, at leaſt on *Sundays*, and learn her Catechiſm, when the *maſquerades*, for the ſeaſon, are over: Which, out of an unſurmountable regard for thy firſt, and moſt amorous, and moſt muſical, ſon, *Chiron*, ſhe confeſſes ingenuouſly, ſhe cannot forbear. For ladies love a Centaur ſtill.

The DIGNITY of MAN Reſumed.

IT is high time, my friend! to quit this fairy land, of which, I know, you are heartily tired; and to perform my promiſe in reſuming *The Dignity of Man:* a theme which my heart affects, and which your conduct, in ſome meaſure, inſpires. And who can think of it, unimproved? He who *thinks* of his Dignity, neceſſarily thinks of his God: And he who *values* his Dignity, as neceſſarily worſhips and obeys Him. In a due ſenſe, therefore, of human Dignity, our endangered virtue finds her moſt powerful guard.

Think

Think you that I have carried the Dignity of Man too high? Spare the ſacred page. "There, one of "*Adam*'s ſeed converſes face to face with his Creator. "Another is called his friend. He who made the "worlds delights to be called the ſon of a third. He "who made the worlds even died for the meaneſt of "men. The meaneſt of men has it within his power "to be an heir of the moſt mighty God, and a joint-"heir with the moſt bleſſed Jeſus." Abſolves not this the boldeſt ſtroke of my pen? What can raiſe our ſelf-eſtimation ſo high, what can aggrandize human nature ſo much as this?

In heaven's great, and conſtant *effort* for our welfare, is capitally written the Dignity of Man. *That* is a key to the moral world, and opens, and explains the reaſon of all God's otherwiſe myſterious conduct in it. Every ſtep of which is evidently calculated for man's preſent, or future, felicity; or both. The long-ſhining ſeries, the golden chain of all God's marvellous acts, from the beginning to the cloſe of time, ſpeaks his uninterrupted regard for human nature; and what can more loudly proclaim human Dignity than this? O let it not be ſaid, that Man's Dignity is declared by all things, but the manners of man!

As diſtant as they may be thought by the thoughtleſs, heaven and earth are ſo near together, ſo ſhot (as it were) into one another, that good men are truly *foreigners on earth; have their converſation in heaven; are fellow-citizens with the ſaints*, and *of the houſehold of God*. To ſpeak alluſively to the patriarchal viſion, good men are angels; only, as yet, at the bottom of the ladder, and ſome angels are only men made per-

fect, at the top of it. As a man from an embryo, ſo differs an angel from a man; what one is, the other ſoon ſhall be. Since this is the caſe (and a moſt glorious caſe it is), and ſince by ſuch multitudes it is either not conſidered, or not known;

O fortunati nimium, bona ſi ſua norunt! VIRG.

would be no needleſs memorandum, or improper motto, for all mankind.

But you ſtill have your objection on the whole—— "Will not raiſing ſo high, and dwelling ſo long on "the Dignity of Man, occaſion pride?" No; on the reverſe, a due ſenſe of it will neceſſitate humility. Pride ſprings from a conceit, which an individual has of his ſuperiority over ſome others of the ſame ſpecies. The Dignity I ſpeak of is equally the Dignity of *all* men; and what levels, cannot exalt. It will *neceſſitate* humility; becauſe without *that*, it cannot preſerve itſelf; our native Dignity will die in the reſult. As for that Dignity which occaſions your objection, we have, I confeſs, too much of it. We have in abundance what may be called *lunar* great men. Men in themſelves opaque, who borrow beams from their circumſtances, or ſituation; which beams they ſhew, like the moon, by night: I mean, when ignorance prevails; then the darkened underſtandings of their admirers give them leave to ſhine.

Theſe lunar grandees have generally many little ſurrounding ſatellites, that help, by their adulations, to gild their opacity. But of ſuch great men, who are forced to *aſſume* (as men muſt plunder, who would be

be gainers where nothing is due), it muſt be ſaid, that the greateſt of them would be greater ſtill, if they would only pleaſe to be a little leſs.

They only have *ſolar*, or ſelf-born, light, who live up to the Dignity of their nature. The light is not only their own, and illuſtrious; but inextinguiſhable, and eternal. Theſe, as they are the greateſt, are alſo the moſt humble, of mankind. For they well know, that our grandeur is to be looked for in the love of God, not in the merit of man. And therefore they ſet it down as a maxim (and a maxim moſt true, and uſeful it is), "No man ever thought too highly of his "nature, or too meanly of himſelf."

Here would I ceaſe. But how hard to get looſe from this ever-teeming, all-important, and inexhauſtible, theme? It fills with ſerene joy the ſuperior region of the ſoul; and denies entrance to the clouds and ſtorms of worldly perturbation, and care. Such the height of its joy, that muſic, and wine, leave the raiſed hearts of our ſons of delight, far, far, below. And yet how is this glorious ſubject in moſt minds, by the love of the world, cloſe compreſſed, and folded up, as an oak in an acorn, or a man in the womb? To develope, and expand it, how great my deſire? In which of its thouſand ſhining lights ſhall I ſet it, for our final contemplation of its mighty moment to man.

Man is the moſt noble ſtudy of man. Let him circle the globe, let him traverſe the ſkies; and then, for ſomething more worthy his notice, and admiration, return to himſelf. To himſelf he is a theatre immenſe: And was reputed ſuch, when that theatre

had much leſs to exhibit, than, at preſent, it can boaſt; and when it was but faintly illuminated with the glimmering beams of far more feeble lights. The ſo-renowned *Know thyſelf*, was nothing but a precept enjoining a cloſe inſpection and ſurvey of this theatre; yet that precept, as to its Author, was held divine; and as to its practice, the ſupreme wiſdom of man. That precept is now exalted into an awful command from heaven; and that theatre is conſecrated into a venerable temple; a temple of the Holy Spirit.

As in ſome pieces of perſpective, by the preſſure of the eye, ſo in this temple, by the preſſure, or perſeverance of thought, the magnificent proſpect is opened, and aggrandized, ſtill more and more; and opening diſcovers the full Dignity of Man. In what does that conſiſt? In the marvellous things the Almighty has done, and deſigned, for him. And if ſo, this ſurvey gives at once the greateſt *virtue*, and the greateſt *bleſſing*, of life. For who can ſee thoſe marvellous things without an ardent *love of God*, which is the ſupreme virtue of man? And who can reflect on ſuch indulgence paſt, without an *abſolute truſt* in *ſuch* a friend for the future; which of man is the Supreme Bleſſing?

But this bleſſing, and this virtue, this glory, and comfort of life, is loſt to thoſe to whom this temple is ſhut. And it is ſhut to the careleſs and ignorant; to the ſlothful, and unawakened, in the moſt illuſtrious theory of the Chriſtian religion. If therefore ſuch men, in what has been advanced, ſhall find any thing like a key to this yet unopened temple; and ſhall enter

ter its ſacred, and ſurpriſing receſſes, and read the wonders of Divine Love in it: that is, in themſelves, in their own condition, and proſpects; if they ſhall ſee, and contemplate, the three Perſons of the Godhead, before creation, aſſuming, and through time's whole length, exerciſing, their ſeparate parts, and provinces of Philanthropy; and ſhall behold an innumerable flight of angels for ever on the wing to receive their commands, and ſpeed away, on various diſpatches, for the temporal, and eternal, welfare of man—How ſhould I rejoice? For ſuch a key would be next in value to the key of heaven. It opens the porch, the preliminary ſcene to it. Therefore have I kept it on the anvil ſo long; and yet how unfiniſhed at laſt? May ſome maſter-hand accompliſh, and multitudes open the yet abſolutely unknown ſcene of their own nature, and bleſſed deſtination, with it.

And now, my friend, tell me, how muſt *his* love of glory fail; how muſt his *ambition* creep, who, after the ſtrong inſpiration of ſuch a view as this, miſerably confines it beneath the ſun? Conſider this view, and ſee how high human nature may ſoar; then look down on the Centaur, and ſee (if thou canſt bear the ſight) how low the ſons of heaven may fall? Shall a being whoſe intereſts ſpread ſo wide as to take in both ends of the creation; ſhall a being deeply concerned in what was done in the days of *Adam*, and more deeply ſtill, in what ſhall be done in the great day of conſummation; ſhall ſuch an expanſive, and far-intereſted, being, with the moſt ſordid, and deſpicable, ſelf-denial, and the moſt inconceivably criminal *Poverty of Spirit*, impriſon his ſtifled thought, and nail down his little heart to the narrow ſpan of this preſent life!

God forbid. If there is the leaſt ſenſe of Dignity, or fear of ſhame; the leaſt ſpark of Man, alive, let us conſider that we are not only the favourites, but the ſons too, of heaven, and obey, in this our voyage of human life, as *Æneas* in his from *Troy*, the *Delian* oracle,

Antiquam exquirite matrem. VIRG.

But our overwhelming ſhame, and almoſt incurable miſery, is, that we are ſo *carnalized* by our luſts, that our heavenly † mother, in our eſteem, has no bleſſing for us; that a *ſpiritual* Paradiſe, is no Paradiſe; that it is a Paradiſe we wiſh loſt; one from which we deſire to fall; and to wallow, *Epicuri de grege porci* in our beloved mire. And yet what is this ſpot of earth which ſo ſwallows us up, and in its gulph of obſcenities extinguiſhes our love of heaven? Its enchantment is very ſhort. A few days, a few hours, may make us as wiſe as *Solomon*. For reſt aſſured, earth's rankeſt idolater, who *now*, perhaps, in our flouriſhing ſchool of infidelity, thinks a wiſer than *Solomon* is here, will, at the cloſe of life, in his aching heart, aſk *Solomon*'s pardon for not believing him before.

I believe that wiſe, and experienced prince, whoſe wiſdom and experience was deſigned to ſpare future ages their own fatal experience in folly; and, cloſing with his *laſt* ſentiment, the ſum of his Divine Philoſophy, affirm, that many a philoſopher may juſtly be reputed a fool; that as there is but one God, one Trial, one great Tribunal, one Salvation; ſo there is but

† Gal. iv. 26.

but one Wisdom; that all which, devoid of *that*, assumes the name, is but folly of different colours, and degrees; gay, grave, wealthy, lettered, domestic, political, civil, military, recluse, ostentatious, humble, or triumphant; and is *so* called in the language of angels, in the sole-authentic, and unalterable style of *eternity*.

That awful word inspires; and awakens ideas that slept before; it points to heaven; and shews me where I fail.—Though studious to do it justice, I have wronged my theme. And wronged it much. Somewhat more is wanting to consummate, and crown, the Dignity of Man. What have I advanced? "That "man is *near* to the blessed angels?" Is he not more? —Yes, most adorable Jesus! man is more: much more. O whither dost Thou call me? Whither dost Thou transport astonished human thought? I scarce dare look up to the summit of such stupendous love. Leave I not cherubim and seraphim below? Ye first-born of light! ye thrones! dominions! principalities! and pow'rs! What do I behold? How awed, and how raptured; with what prostration of heart, what elevation of joy, from this remote region, this lowest vale of the creation, this land of darkness, and shadow of death, look I up through incumbent clouds of misery and sin, and behold—a *Man* in heaven! In the highest heaven! In union with the Most High! In union with *your* most adored, and eternal King! And so throned in authority, to *you* so superior in power, as to make ceaseless intercession for the rest of mankind; not for *those* whose fall left seats empty in heaven: Oh aid me with *your* language, with words more than human to praise Him! that Advocate unweari-

ed for his relations (proud language!) for his earth-born relations, and friends, below.

Is not this *almoſt* too much for human modeſty to mention? For human frailty to credit? For human corruption to admit?—But is it not alſo *far* too much for human gratitude to leave unproclaimed, unreſounded, unadored! *I go to my Father, and your Father, to my God, and your God.* What heart-ſubduing, thought-overwhelming, man-exalting, words are theſe? What an amazing, I had almoſt ſaid *levelling*, condeſcenſion of the Deity! What an amazing, I had almoſt ſaid what a *deifying*, ſublimation of man!

O bleſſed revelation! that opens ſuch wonders. O dreadful revelation! if it opens them in vain. And are there thoſe with whom they go for nought? Strange men! in poſſeſſion of a bleſſing, the bare hopes of which ſupported the ſpirits of the wiſe, for four thouſand years, under all the calamities of life, and terrors of death; and know they not that it is in their hands? Or knowing, caſt it away as of no value? A bleſſing, the very ſhadow of which made the body of the Patriarchal, and Jewiſh religion! A bleſſing, after which the whole earth panted, as the hart for the water-brooks! A bleſſing on which the heavenly hoſt were ſent to congratulate mankind; and ſing the glad tidings into their tranſported hearts! A bleſſing, which was more than an equivalent for Paradiſe loſt! And is this bleſſing declined, rejected, exploded, deſpiſed, ridiculed? O unhappy men!—The frailty of man is almoſt as incomprehenſible as the mercies of God.

Who

Who then can inculcate too much the Dignity of Man! For what equally to a due ſenſe of it can inſpire a contempt of the world, a fondneſs for which occaſions the madneſs I deplore? Indeed a due ſenſe of it, evidently, includes the whole of our duty. It inſpires high veneration, and great gratitude, to GOD, who gave it; it inſpires a reverence for ourſelves, which is of utmoſt moment to our character and peace; and it inſpires a proper regard for all mankind, as equal ſharers in it: Which regard would prevent infinite miſchief; and baniſh half the miſeries of life.

This, its univerſal uſe, its nature ſo pregnant of good effects, determined me to the choice of this too much neglected ſubject. And perhaps, I have now ſet it in the ſtrongeſt light. But if not; its importance is ſuch that it ſhould be ſet in *all* lights, and from every point that imagination can ſuggeſt, and reaſon authorize, ſtrike, if poſſible, the degenerate, deeply-ſunk, and ever-groveling, human heart. He that looks not on man in the light above, or ſome light ſimilar, and equivalent, knows not himſelf; is a perfect ſtranger at home; his heart wanders an exile from his deſtined felicity; he deprives himſelf of the powerful impulſe which he ſo much wants, and which nature denies, and which revelation deſigned him, for his more vigorous advance in virtue here: and his more ſublime aſcent in glory hereafter: Which two are the whole of his happineſs; all the reſt is extrinſic, precarious, tranſient, and, inevitably, mortal.

And who will dare ſay, that he who declines, or falls from the noble, and elevating object of contemplation above-mentioned, and the glorious hopes it

inſpires, into the barren field of amuſement, and trifle; or into the beſtial abyſs of a few years debauch, for his portion; who will dare affirm, that ſuch a wretch differs not as much in reaſon, and happineſs, from the true Chriſtian, as a *quadruped* differs, in form, from a man? It is not form, but manners, which make humanity. The mould in which we are caſt, only ſays what we *ſhould be;* nothing but our conduct tells us what *we are.* What wretches are they who contradict their figure; and accuſe nature of having ſet a wrong ſtamp on their lying clay! The moſt deſpicable and deplorable being under heaven is a Pagan in a Chriſtian land. He is like a rank growth of poiſon in Paradiſe. He confines that thought which ſhould ſet out at the creation, and travel down with wonder and adoration, at every ſtep, through the countleſs mercies and miracles of God for man, into nature's final diſſolution; and thence launch for a never-ending voyage in a bleſſed Eternity,—to the nothing of threeſcore years; and the wretched means of annihilating that nothing, of contracting that ſpan; luſt exhauſts, luxury overwhelms, and, by heaping on fuel, quite puts out the fire.

Where is that *Dignity* which reaſon exacts, and which revelation exalts, in man? In what I have ſaid on that ſubject, I have, I think, done more to our purpoſe, than he who meaſures the heavens, and numbers the ſtars. I have taken (as I conceive) the true meaſure of Man. That extenſive meaſure riſing above the ſkies, which the Centaur dwarfs down to the ſcanty ſpan of the brute creation, to the *beſtia triumphanti*; and making (might I ſo ſpeak) a dunghill of our condition, with the cock in the fable, for a grain of ſenſuality,

ſuality, ſpurns the jewel away; the powers angelic, the radiant beams of the divinity, in the *real* Man.

But while I contemplate his grandeur (ſo mixt our nature, ſo great, and little, is Man), I feel his weakneſs: In mind, and body, I feel his infirmities—Pain, this inſtant, ſtops my pen—Stops it ſhort of what I had propoſed to ſay.—It bids me take, while I may, my leave of him I love.—I take a ſolemn, becauſe, perhaps, a final, leave. It is, at leaſt, poſſible, we may meet no more. No more in this foreign land; in this gloomy apartment of the boundleſs univerſe of God.

O Thou! the laſt, and ſtrongeſt hold that earth has on me! my friend in Jeſus Chriſt! my rival in immortal hope! and my companion (I truſt) for eternity! come to my boſom: Though ſo far remote, I take thee to my heart. Souls ſuffer no ſeparation from obſtruction of matter, or diſtance of place; oceans may roll between us, and climates interpoſe, in vain. The whole material creation is no bar to the winged mind. Farewel.—Through boundleſs ages, fare thou well. The Dignity of Man, and bleſſing of heaven, be with thee! The broad hand of the Almighty cover thee: May'ſt thou ſhine, when the ſun is quenched! May'ſt thou live, and triumph, when time expires!

This cordial duty done, this human debt diſcharged, my mind is eaſed, my ſpirits revive: my pain is leſs. And when this endleſs letter is ended, I ſhall drop thee for *the preſent*; and this idle pen, and an idler world (that other feather in the ſcale of eterni-

ty) *for ever.* He that drops the world, before that drops him, he *only* knows its real value; and the value of his own ſoul. And whatever the gaiety of the world pretends to, he *only* can have a ſolid, permanent, and uninterrupted joy of heart, who builds it on the rock; on hope of the Divine Mercy. Give a man the world, and give him no more; and his happineſs is at an end: The human heart will neceſſarily feel a futurity, through all the ſuperabundance earth can heap on it: Nothing can poſſibly give it a peace independent of an hereafter: That point of view in his creation, that purchaſe of blood in his redemption, and yet in human conduct, that ever neglected *All* of man.

Aſk the laſt bill of mortality; aſk pleaſure's or ambition's triumph moſt triumphant, what is human life? Knowledge of the world recommends receſs; knowledge of life reconciles to the grave. Few ſufficiently conſider how great mercy is implied in the grant of death. With a heart quite diſengaged, its cable cut, imploring a ſmooth paſſage, and gentle gale, bound for that port whence none returns, I wait the mighty MASTER's call: That call irreſiſtible, which every moment ſhould expect; which every fool forgets; every knave dreads; every wiſe man welcomes; and every monarch obeys.

And yet, my friend, ſome of our few coævals cloſe not altogether with this way of thinking; but rather ſeem to judge, that ſome little degree of precipitation may be laid to its charge. As the dial knows not the hour it points out; ſo they, by their infirmities and decays, diſcover their time of day to all, but themſelves.

ſelves. Their deſires grow ſtronger as enjoyments grow more coy. It is ſomewhat to be feared, that their hearts gravitate, almoſt as much as their ſcarce-animated clay; and take but few, and feeble flights above the level of the world; though very excellent things are ſpoken of thee, Thou welcome Haven of Eternal Reſt! Thou delightful Region of inextinguiſhable Love! Thou great Goal of Perfection! Thou bright Meridian of Glory! Thou boundleſs Ocean of *unrepenting Pleaſure!* Thou City of God!

And is man invited to this fullneſs of fruition? And is man *importuned* to partake the glories of the Almighty?—He that weighs not well this tranſcendent height of Love Divine, is far from being able to comprehend the terrible depth of human guilt. And what guilt ſo deep as that of a *baptized* infidel? A rank heathen riſing out of the ſacred font, is *reaſon*'s greateſt ſhock, the deepeſt wound of rectitude, the blackeſt brand of earth, the ſigh of angels, a ſecond ſpear in the ſide of the moſt Bleſſed Jeſus, and the ſupreme triumph of the foe to God, and Man.

Moſt gracious God! in *happineſs* and *dignity*, how widely diſtant is man from man? In both, what an immenſe ſuperiority has the pious believer? Scarce ſeems of the ſame ſpecies the believing, and apoſtate, world. To the *firſt*, how juſtly may we cry out, O ye happy ſons of the fallen *Adam!* where is the damage you received from your father's fall? Where are the once lamenting miſeries of life; where are the once unſurmountable terrors of death, fled? I diſcern the Dignity of man, when his carcaſe is in the duſt. I congratulate his happineſs while the worm

is

is feaſting on him. Rejoice, O ye dead! exult and ſing, ye dark inhabitants of the grave! For do I not behold, even in the grave, the comfort of heaven; when, with an eye of Chriſtian faith, in heaven I behold a *Man?* The Man Chriſt Jeſus? And with tranſport, and adoration, let me reſound the loftylanguage of the prophet,—*A man the fellow of the Almighty* †.

† Zachar. c. xiii. 7.

THE CONCLUSION.

AND now, my friend! let us conſider how deplorably wretched is that man amongſt us, who is deaf to *ſuch* a voice, and blind to *ſuch* a ſight! And how criminally wretched is he, if he voluntarily declines them? If he voluntarily recals the ſuſpended curſe; obſtinately preſents diſarmed death with his mortal ſting again; and pours out, in his diſtraction, all the phials of its original bitterneſs on the days, how diſmal and unredeemed, of an apoſtate human life? What a formidable *revelation* does ſuch a man beſpeak in lieu of that which brought pardon and peace? What a revelation of no *glad tidings* awaits him, when his now-involving cloud breaks, and truth thunders on the dreadfully illumined ſoul, at the no-diſtant hour of death?

It is, indeed, in man's option, which of theſe *revelations* he will admit (one he muſt); but it is not in man's wiſdom to make the leaſt apology for a wrong option in ſo plain and important a point. A point how plain? I ſhall here juſt touch on a ſingle proof of the truth of Chriſtianity, which renders any further proof, among proofs

proofs innumerable, unneceſſary with me, to create and ſupport our Chriſtian faith.

Every thing in the *natural* world is a proof a God; and almoſt every thing in the *moral* world is a proof of a revelation. As, in the material univerſe, all exactly correſponds with the previous ideas of it in the Divine Mind; and in a ſubſtantial copy renders legible to man its inviſible pattern, in the thought of the Almighty; ſo a complete hiſtory of mankind (if ſuch could be had) would be little more than the ſame Almighty's *prophetic* word in Scripture, materialized into fact. The prophets are more accurate and authentic hiſtorians of the *future* than the moſt happy genius, uninſpired, can poſſibly be of the *paſt*. And want we *miracles* for our conviction? The ſeries of Scripture prophecies accompliſhed, is the moſt ſtriking of miracles: It is a miracle not expiring in a tranſient act! but of great longævity, perſiſting in a perpetual increaſing weight and validity, through the protracted courſe of many thouſand years. It is a living, growing, permanent, paramount, miracle, lighted up as a lamp of illumination for all ages; that all able to ſee, might be quite unable to diſbelieve; quite unable to retain reaſon, and, at the ſame time, renounce belief. For if the Scripture prophecies are fulfilled, the Scripture is the word of God; and if the Scripture is the word of God, Chriſtianity cannot be falſe. Shall we reject it as falſe, when, in the *preſent* fate of almoſt all nations, we are ſurrounded, and condemned, by a full ocular demonſtration of its being true! Let us diſpute our own exiſtence, if we would continue of a piece with this.

Where

Where is our natural curioſity? And that, in points which concern us moſt? Would we know what we *are*; or what we *may*, or *muſt* be to all eternity? Nothing but revelation can tell us either. So that if we acted on no higher motive than mere inſtinct, revelation would be precious in our ſight. But vice extinguiſhes not our reaſon only, but our inſtinct too, when it would do us any good. Either the ſtrongeſt inſtinct of curioſity is extinguiſhed by it, or there is an aſtoniſhing, and pernicious ſelf-denial in infidels, if their moſt natural curioſity is ſtill alive. Revelation was written for our inſtruction; and are we too wiſe to be inſtructed by God himſelf? Throw we by unread, and as of no conſequence, an unſealed letter ſent to us from the Almighty?

In our infidels it is no leſs than defiance of common ſenſe, no leſs than hardened impudence to the rational nature of man, to pretend, that, on due inquiry, they want proof of the truth of the Goſpel. Its proof is not only great, but amazing; it is not only ſufficient to convince, but aſtoniſh: Such its accumulated, overwhelming, evidence, ſo truly *marvellous its lights*, that if rejected, it lays us under a neceſſity of rejecting reaſon, and revelation, together. And is not *reaſon obeyed*, the ſole dignity, glory, grandeur, of gods, and men? Nothing can ſo much degrade as the violation of reaſon; and no violation of reaſon is equal to a wrong option in this point ſupreme. Too faint is the ſtrongeſt colouring of all the ſevere fables of antiquity, to reach an abſurdity ſo abſurd.

That of *Circe*'s Sty, and *Chiron*'s Stud, falls ſhort of the mark. For reaſon, in thoſe days, had not ſuch powerful

powerful motives to combat, or ſuch glaring lights to reſiſt. And guilt blackens, in proportion to the ſtrength of the lights reſiſted, and the motives overcome.

Since then (as has been proved) if reaſon makes a man, by ceaſing to be Chriſtians, they ceaſe to be men; by what term ſhall we call thoſe, whom no term can defame? Let, therefore, your offended ſiſter pardon my *parable;* and let no honeſt man, for the future, ſo far offend propriety, and profane our language, as to join in one abuſed word ſuch repugnant ideas, as thoſe of the Centaur and the man; *one* the idea of a being, horridly rejoicing in the miſerable, and miſtaken, thought, that this ſhort life, ſhortened by vice and vanity, is his All; and that, like the ſnuff of a candle, it ſhall go out for ever: rejoicing to think, that after all his buſtle and ambition, he ſhall only by his *putrid carcaſe*, add rankneſs to a clod of earth, and defile the dirt: The *other* idea is that of a being, big with humble, but triumphant, hope, of exalting with his *immortal ſpirit*, joy celeſtial; of adding melody to ſeraphic choirs, in ceaſeleſs Hallelujahs to their Eternal King. "Sing praiſes, ſing praiſes to our God; "ſing praiſes, ſing praiſes to our King. Praiſe "him, all ye angels! praiſe him, all his hoſt! "praiſe him, ſun and moon! praiſe him all ye "ſtars, and light!" For a fairer light, a nobler ſtar, a more illuſtrious ſun is riſen; the ſun of righteouſneſs with healing in his wings; and all the glories of unbounded creation are outſhone by the ſmalleſt beam of the goſpel; by the fainteſt hope of wrath appeaſed, and eternal life.

Yet

Yet this is that light, which ſome, in their ſuperior wiſdom, would extinguiſh as ſuperfluous to man, and ſet up the dim taper of their reaſon in its ſtead:

O *thou worſt* guide, philoſopher, and friend!
Say, for thou know'ſt, what is it to be wiſe?
Eſſ. on Man.

With equal *wiſdom*, thou mighteſt imagine the ſun ſuperfluous, and unneceſſary to the material world; and call on chaos for primæval darkneſs, as the great bleſſing of mankind. Say, for, *now* indeed, thou knoweſt, is not *Lucifer* in the liſt of ſuch benefactors as theſe?

Though in *this*, his lordſhip is quite as good a friend to mankind, as he is a philoſopher in his *materiality* of the ſoul; yet I will venture advancing towards that precious doctrine, ſo far, as to call, without ſcruple, ſuch ſort of imaginations the *thoughts of the body*; for from the body's predominance they, neceſſarily, riſe: And that neceſſity proves the neceſſity of religion, which they reſiſt: ſo that ſuch men (which, perhaps, they are not aware of), while, as much as they can, they condemn religion, they commend it too; they as loudly call for it, as the diſeaſe for the cure. For religion is nothing, but an expedient for ſupporting, againſt the body's aſſaults and encroachments, the ſacred intereſts of the ſoul.

At your requeſt, Sir, in the wide-ſpread ruins of our *faith* and *virtue*, I have taken a ſlight view of a more melancholy ſcene, than could be preſented by famine, peſtilence, or the ſword: but, by God's grace, we ſhall repent; and not ſuffer our greateſt glory to become

become our greateſt dread; not ſuffer our prime and unſpeakable bleſſing, *immortality*, to render exiſtence the moſt inſupportable curſe. What a terrible inverſion is this of the high favours of heaven! This muſt be the caſe, when man is all *ſenſe*: For to ſenſe nothing exiſts but the *preſent*. Our preſent is ſo dear, that our future is undone. Strange conduct! when our ſtep *out* of life is ſo ſhort, and ſo ſure, ſudden, and innumerable our accidents *in* it, that almoſt every moment aſſures us, that unleſs in time we lay hold on our *inviſible*, and, to reaſon alone, exiſting God, we ſhall ſoon fall from all we held ſo dear; and that then, not only all our happineſs, but all our hope, is at an end.

What is there, O my countrymen! O my friend! O my poor, endangered, immortal ſoul! what is there, from *Adam* to this hour, but fully confirms what I ſay? The world allures us; the world condemns us; he who takes that kind advice, which thro' his own experience, the world conveys, will deſpiſe all its charms. As ignorance teems with infidelity, ſo knowledge is a faſt friend of faith. If we would but know, what we cannot but know; if we would but believe our ſenſes in what paſſes, and our common records in what has paſſed; it would not only reconcile us to, but, almoſt, ſupply the place of, our *Creed*; ſo very natural a growth is the Chriſtian of the man.

As natural a growth of an infidel is a beaſt: a beaſt by God uncreated; by *Adam* unnamed. That defect *Adam*'s meaneſt ſon has ſupplied, by writing CENTAUR in the horrid gap, which the bold infidel has made, by the deſperate eraſure of his chriſtian name.

Is

Is this thought too opprobrious, and a term of reproach?—I will make ſome amends by a ſhort hint of advice, which may ſave from reproach the whole length of their lives. "Let not the brute any longer run away "with the man, leſt ſomething more dreadful ſhould "run away with the brute."

If this advice is refuſed, as *Alexander* ſaid of the *Perſian* effeminate army, *there are many enemies, but few ſoldiers*; ſo ſay I, of this *Paphian* iſle, *there are a multitude of people, but a ſmall remnant of men!* And of all brutes the moſt brutal is the volunteer in brutality; the brute ſelf-made; the brute not from the decree, but abuſe, of nature; the *ſtrange* brute-affrighting brute, with the ſtature, veſture, voice, and face of man; the brute *myſterious*, irrationally rational, and (with horror let me ſpeak it), *deplorably* immortal.

Does the *Centaur* ſtill ſound too harſh in their ears? I will ſo far indulge them, as to change it for *ſlave*; and inſtead of making free with their hides, only rattle their chains. For chains they wear, galling, infamous chains! Till ſtubborn and wild will is broken by grace, and reaſon, no man is free; but madly prefers the heavy burdens of his luſt, and the ſcourges of conſcience, to the glorious liberty of the ſons of God.

And is it poſſible that *pride* ſhould be the growth of ſlavery? They are proud of bondage, triumph in infamy, and imagine that in their high flights of folly, and riot unreſtrained, there is ſomething great. No man is great, till he ſees that every thing in this world is little. And of all that is little, that *they* are the

the leaſt. Would they know what is greatneſs? Great is he, and he alone, who makes the whole creation, and its amazing cauſe, the *circumference*, and his own *true* intereſt the *centre*, of his thoughts. Who has ſtrength and ſteadineſs, to weigh in perpetual and equal balance, right and wrong, body and ſoul, time and eternity, nature and God; and ſo weighing, to diſdain any *very* anxious thought, for leſs than the greateſt good his limited nature admits, and his all-powerful God has promiſed to beſtow. That God *whoſe are the pillars of the earth, and who has ſet the world upon them. Who in his wrath thunders out of heaven, and his adverſaries are broken to pieces.*

In *this*, Sir, in giving our ſupreme good, our ſupreme effort and concern, in ſpight of a temptation, lies the greatneſs of man. Well may it lie in a prudence, *ſuch* a prudence, as angels cannot exceed. If this is wanting, vain are all other pretenſions to greatneſs, whether of king, hero, or philoſopher. And a *Cæſar*, a *Marlborough*, a *Newton*, a *Bolingbroke*, a fidler, tumbler, and ſcaramouch, may be thrown together into one promiſcuous heap of equal impotence for attaining true greatneſs. The *performance*, indeed, of each of theſe candidates for glory, the multitude may admire; but the *performer*, at the ſame time, will be condemned by the wiſe, as little-minded and mean; as a very *fool* in the language of Scripture; that is, in the judgment of God.

You ſee, therefore, to what titles of renown our *fine men*, on the ſtricteſt enquiry, may put in a juſt pretence: *fool! ſlave! centaur!*—The laſt is the neweſt, and (which would be well for them) may be the leaſt underſtood;

underſtood; but let them chuſe which they pleaſe. Were it referred to me, their antichriſtian glory ſhould be quite aggrandized, and ſhine, like his *holineſs*, triple-crowned with all three.

To that tremendous power, which *alone* is *truly* great, and good; in whoſe favour is all light, life, hope, peace, joy, and ſalvation; be thanks, praiſe, and dominion over the *rebel*, *fool*, *ſlave*, and *centaur*, in our hearts. And may our hearts, thus exerciſed, have a lively *feeling* of the God inviſible; and, panting for the rivers of *true pleaſure* at his right hand, abhor the *life in vogue*; and in *faith* unſhaken, and *virtue* unfeigned, be confirmed for evermore: nor longer (to the reproach eternal of the preſent age) let our ſins, as well as our ſituation, proclaim us to be

——*Toto diviſos orbe Britannos.* VIRG.

But to damp my riſing hope, I know not if *another* diſtinction of *Britons* from the greateſt part of mankind, may not have been the glorious indeed, but fatal cauſe of this moſt ignominious effect. It is the great glory of God to draw good out of evil. To draw evil out of good is the great infamy of man.

I ſuſpect, that an inſolent pride in *Britiſh* liberty, in ſome meaſure, inſpires *Britiſh* licence of thought, and extravagance of opinion; which as extravagant a practice for ever follows: if ſo, vice, and infidelity, are as much our *national* diſtempers, as the ſcurvy, or the ſpleen. Though diſcretion much befriends happineſs, happineſs is no friend to diſcretion. Great

bleſſings

bleſſings intoxicate. Liberty, fraught with bleſſings as it is, when *unabuſed*, has, perhaps, been abuſed to our deſtruction. And as *Britiſh* malt, ſublimated into the moſt pernicious liquor (now ſo much in uſe) ſo *Britiſh* liberty, carried into licentiouſneſs, has poiſoned and brutaliſed the *Britiſh* ſtate. By too much exalting our ſpirits, it corrupts our manners; and that glory of our conſtitution is the diſgrace of our lives. Purely to prove themſelves *freemen*, ſome turn infidels: Hanging themſelves would be as good, and, to the public, a leſs pernicious, proof. Such men ſhould perform a long quarentine ere admitted to the embrace even of a brother. Heaven preſerve thee, my friend, from the freedom, and wiſdom, and happineſs, now in vogue. He is moſt free who is bound by the laws; he is moſt wiſe who owns himſelf weak; he is moſt happy who abridges his *pleaſures*; and he is moſt magnanimous, O ye bold, intrepid, heaven-defying, *Britons!* who fears his God.

He, indeed, is the moſt magnanimous, for by that fear he is fortified againſt all other. And he is *by far* the moſt happy! for the Divine Favour, the light of God's countenance is the *ſun* of the human ſoul, whence all its vegetation of real felicity; and though the world, (which from him receives all its feeble rays) may greatly ſhine in our eyes, yet, as wiſely may we expect vigorous and vivifying heat from the *moon*, as any *ſolid* ſatisfaction from it.

But juſt one word to the buſy, ambitious, learned, and gay. Vice and virtue excepted, no man on earth can ſay, what is good or ill, in as great a tumult and uproar as your paſſions are, O ye *buſy!* and *ambitious!*

ous! about every thing *elſe:* And to love, and labour at, what God commands, and to deſire and hope, what he promiſes, is the ſingle great leſſon, O ye *learned!* and the ſingle true pleaſure, O ye *gay!* of human life.

And, now, my friend, farewell. I muſt truſt myſelf no longer with the pen; for while I think there is a poſſibility, that, touched by ſome happy ſtroke, but one fellow mortal may be raiſed from a periſhing *man of the earth,* to a bleſſed immortal, my buſy mind perpetually ſuggeſts new hints, and my heart knows not how to refrain from purſuing them. The volume grows upon my hands, till its very bulk would defeat its end. New rays of thought dart in upon me, which, like croſs lights, confound and perplex each other. Something of this you may have perceived already Even Centaurs *have been* human, and I feel the ſtrong tie of humanity, when going to bid them a laſt, an everlaſting farewel. Like one about to leave unhappy friends in the midſt of a deſtruction, which yet, by timely care, they might eſcape, ſtill, at the moment of departure, ſome new caution occurs to me, ſome new exhortation, ſomething unſaid, or not ſo well ſaid, as it might have been. But now, the adieu muſt be final. With only this additional, and ſtill more urgent, and to them ſurpriſing, motive for reformation, *(viz.)* My aſſuring them, that what I have hitherto, through tenderneſs, allowed to paſs for fable, is actual fact. That the Centaur is *indeed* not fabulous. That a man without religion is really a beaſt; and ſuch is he pronounced in Scripture, where it is ſaid that * *He alſo is fleſh;* that is, a brute! And (what ſhould

* Gen. vi.

ſhould ſtrike them not a little) this is aſſigned as the reaſon for ſweeping away our degenerate race by the flood. A brute, in truth, he is, with this only difference, that his ſuperior underſtanding gives him more venom than the moſt envenomed of ſerpents; and enables him to do more fatal miſchief to himſelf, and others, than without the curſe of reaſon, of abuſed reaſon, could poſſibly be done. So far therefore is it from ſatire, that kind admonition is all which the word Centaur implies. And as in ſome words there was once imagined to reſide a magic power over *dæmons* themſelves, that opinion might ſtill prevail, if the deſign of theſe letters, to the wiſh of all honeſt men, could ſucceed, and the foul nature of the Centaur be caſt out by the name. If this ſhould be the fortunate event, theſe pages would live in the lives of thoſe they ſhall reclaim. And if ſo, O *Bolingbroke!* and you, his applauding idolizers! what to *this* is that vain immortality which the meaneſt writers wiſh, and which the nobleſt can ſcarce attain? Praiſe is an error, where Pardon is indulgence; and pardon is indulgence to the brighteſt parts miſapplied. They rather provoke, than pleaſe, the worthy mind, by laying it under the diſagreeable neceſſity, and claſhing diſpoſitions, of admiring the writer, and diſapproving the man. Which, in ſome ſort, is like admiring *Nero* for his fiddle, when, through his own frenzy, his glorious capital was in flames.

I am, my dear friend,

Truly Yours.

Nov. 29, 1754.

POSTSCRIPT.

I Received your objections, and thank you for them. I believe every judicious reader will make the ſame. All I can ſay, for mitigation of their cenſure, is, that they who take on them to read lectures in this laughing age, if they wiſh an audience but moderately large, muſt have weight enough to make impreſſion on the ſerious; and levity enough to catch thoſe wanton ears, which, unleſs tickled by that feather, would continue ſhut as cloſe, as their ſilly hearts are to virtue, though an angel ſhould take the chair.

I know you are ſo kindly concerned for your friend's reputation, that the mixture of levity with ſolemnity, in theſe letters, makes you apprehenſive of its expoſing the writer to cenſure or ridicule. Yet, how is it poſſible to write on ſo dreadfully mixed a ſubject, as the ways of men, without being agitated by the moſt contradictory emotions? His follies ſo fantaſtically wrong, ſo ludicrouſly abſurd: His capacities for virtue and happineſs, ſo noble: His vices ſo ſhocking: Their conſequence ſo deplorable!—So earneſtly deſirous I am of waking him from that dream, in which he nods upon the brink of eternal ruin, that if nothing can do it but my own diſgrace, my own *buffoonery* (as perhaps he will think it), I rejoice to fall ſo low. If he will but laugh *with* me, at *himſelf*, he is freely welcome to laugh *at* me, as much as he ſees cauſe. It is not his applauſe, but his welfare, that is ſought. *Amendment* is the point in view. That point unpropoſed, (and could the † Viſcount propoſe it?) all cenſure is mere malice, and

† Lord Bolingbroke.

and mere impertinence is all harangue; and entitles a *Tully*, a *Bolingbroke*, and a parrot, to juſt the ſame portion of our eſteem, and applauſe. Would you, my friend, judge aright of men! Aſk not *what* they have done, but *why*; or their characters will be ſtill in the dark.—But I fear I am ſetting your judgment of men too right for my own intereſt; I muſt leave it under the power of ſome partiality, for the ſake of your humble ſervant.

Pardon one word more. † *Centaur* is of *Greek* extraction, and ſignifies ſtimulation. May it here prove (as intended) a ſpur to virtue; and, moſt, in myſelf. Standing in awe of my own pen, may I take the counſel I give! Thus only can I be *ſure* of doing any good; thus only can I boldly ſay, without the reader's leave, that I have not writ in vain. Is not this a new expedient for writing to ſome little purpoſe; and an expedient of no ſmall ſervice to the public, if all our writers would uſe the ſame? Their numbers, then, would be leſs a nuiſance; and half the nation (bleſſed change!) would aim at virtue, as well as fame. This, too, might be ſome ſort of apology for thoſe heroes of the pen, who, dauntleſs at their own danger, with the ſpirit of a *Curtius*, for the ſake of their dear country, leap headlong into the preſs, (too haſty patriots!) and periſh there.

Vincit amor patriæ, laudumque immenſa cupido. VIRG.

† From Κεντεω, ſtimulare.

THE
FOREIGN ADDRESS;
OCCASIONED BY THE
BRITISH FLEET,
AND THE
POSTURE OF AFFAIRS,
M.DCC.XXXIV.

Written in the character of a SAILOR.

Muſa dedit fidibus divos puerosque Deorum. HOR.

THE FOREIGN ADDRESS; ON THE POSTURE OF AFFAIRS.

I.

YE guardian gods! who wait on kings,
And gently touch the ſecret ſprings
Of riſing thought, ſolicit, I beſeech,
For a poor ſtranger come from far;
Procure a ſuppliant traveller
Eaſe of acceſs, and the ſoft hour of ſpeech.

II.

'Tis gain'd: hail, monarchs great and wiſe!
From diſtant climes, and duſky ſkies,
O'er ſeas and lands I flew, your ear to claim:
Yours is the ſun, and purple vine;
Deep in the frozen north I pine;
Nor vine, nor ſun, could warm me like my theme.

III.

A theme how great! on yonder tide
A leafleſs foreſt ſpreading wide
The labour of the deep, my muſe ſurveys:
A Fleet, whoſe empire o'er the wave
You grant, Time ſtrengthens, Nature gave;
Now big with death, the terror of the ſeas!

IV.

Ye great by ſea! ye ſhades ador'd!
Who fir'd the bomb, and bath'd the ſword,
Ariſe! ariſe! ariſe! 'tis Britain charms;
Ariſe, ye boaſt of former wars!
And pointing, to your glorious ſcars,
Rouſe me to verſe, your martial ſons to arms.

V.

'Tis done: and ſee, ſweet Clio brings
From heav'n her deep-reſounding ſtrings:
Clio! the * god which gave thy charming ſhell,
Demands its moſt exalted ſtrain,
To ſing the ſov'reign of the main:
Of Ocean's queen what wonders wilt thou tell?

VI.

Such wonders as may paſs for ſport,
Or viſion in a ſouthern court:
But, mighty Thrones! thoſe truths which make me glow,
Your fathers ſaw, your ſons ſhall ſee:
Then quit your infidelity;
Some truths 'tis better to believe than know.

VII.

Believe me, Kings! at Britain's nod,
From each inchanted grove and wood,
Huge oaks ſtalk down th' unſhaded mountain's ſide;
The lofty pines aſſume new forms,
Fly round the globe, and live in ſtorms;
And tread and triumph on the wond'ring tide.

VIII.

She nods again: the lab'ring earth
Diſcloſes a ſtupendous birth;
In ſmoking rivers runs her molten ore:
Thence,

* Neptune.

Thence, monſters of enormous ſize,
And hideous nature, frowning riſe,
Flame from the deck, from trembling baſtions roar.

IX.

Theſe miniſters of wrath fulfil,
On empires wide, an iſland's will:
Ye nations! know; know, all ye ſcepter'd pow'rs!
In ſulph'rous night, and maſſy balls,
And floods of flame, the tempeſt falls,
When ſtern Britannia's awful ſenate lours.

X.

Bold is the ſtyle, when hearts are bold!
Would Britain have her anger told?
O! never let a meaner language ſound,
Than that which thro' black æther rouls,
Than that which proſtrates human ſouls,
And rocks pale realms, when angry Jove has frown'd.

XI.

In peace ſhe ſheaths her courage keen,
And ſpares her nitrous magazine;
Her cannon ſlumber at the world's deſire;
But, give juſt cauſe, at once they blaze,
At once they thunder from the ſeas,
Touch'd by their injur'd maſter's ſoul of fire.

XII.

The Furies riſe! the battle raves!
And rends the ſkies, and warms the waves,
And calls a tempeſt from the peaceful deep,
In ſpite of nature, ſpite of Jove,
Whilſt all ſerene, and huſh'd above,
The boiſt'rous winds in azure chambers ſleep.

XIII.

This, this, my Monarchs! is the ſcene
For hearts of proof, for gods of men;

Here War's whole ſting is ſhot, whole heart is ſpent!
You ſport in arms; how pale, how tame,
How lambent, is Bellona's flame,
How her ſtorms languiſh on the continent!

XIV.

A ſwarm of deaths the mighty bomb
Now ſcatters from her glowing womb;
Now the chain'd bolts in dread alliance join'd,
Red-wing'd with an expanding blaſt,
Sweep, in black whirlwinds, man and maſt,
And leave a ſing'd and naked hull behind.

XV.

Now—but I'm ſtruck with pale deſpair;
My Patrons! what a burſt was there!
The ſtrong-ribb'd barques at once diſploding fly!
Inſatiate death! compendious fate!
Deep wound to ſome brave bleeding ſtate!
One moment's guilt a thouſand heroes die.

XVI.

The great, gay, graceful, young and brave,
(Short obſequies!) the ſable wave
Involves in endleſs night: ye graveleſs dead!
Where are your conqueſts! now you rove
Pale, penſive, thro' the coral grove,
Or ſhrink from Britain in your oozy bed.

XVII.

While virgins fair, with tender toil,
Of fragrant blooms their gardens ſpoil,
Low ly the brows for which the wreath's deſign'd,
In ſea-weed wrapt; alas! how vain
The hope, the joy, the grief, the pain,
The love, and godlike valour, of mankind?

XVIII.

XVIII.

Of braſs his heart who durſt explore,
Shut up in triple braſs and more,
Who when explor'd the ſecret durſt explain;
How, in one inſtant, at one blow,
The maiden's ſigh, the mother's throe,
Of half a widow'd land to render vain.

XIX.

See! yon cowl'd friar in his cell,
With ſulphur, flame, and crucible:
And can the charms of gold that faint inſpire!
O curſed cauſe! O curs'd event!
O wondrous power of accident!
He rivals gods, and ſets the globe on fire.

XX.

But the rank growth of modern ill,
Too well deſerv'd that fatal ſkill,
The ſkill by which deſtruction ſwiftly runs;
And ſeas, and lands, and worlds, lays waſte,
With far more terror, far more haſte,
Than ancient Nimrod, and his haughty ſons.

XXI.

In frown and force old war muſt yield;
The chariot ſcyth'd, which mow'd the field,
The ram, the caſtled elephant, were tame,
Tame to rang'd ordnance, which denies
Superior terror to the ſkies,
And claims the cloud, the thunder, and the flame.

XXII.

The flame, the thunder, and the cloud,
The night by day, the ſea of blood,
Hoſts whirl'd in air, the yell, the ſinking throng,

The graveleſs dead, an ocean warm'd,
A firmament by mortals ſtorm'd,
To wrong'd Britannia's angry brow belong.

XXIII.

Or do I dream, or do I rave?
Or do I ſee the gloomy cave,
Where Jove's red bolts the giant-brothers frame?
The ſwarthy gods of toil and heat
Loud peals on mountain-anvils beat,
And panting tempeſts rouſe the roaring flame.

XXIV.

Ye ſons of Etna! hear my call;
Let your unfiniſh'd labours fall,
That ſhields of Mars, Minerva's helmet blue:
Suſpend your toils, ye brawny throng!
Charm'd by the magic of my ſong,
Drop the feign'd thunder, and attempt the true.

XXV.

Begin; and firſt take winged flight,
Fierce flames, and clouds of thickeſt night,
And trembling terror, paler than the dead;
Then borrow from the north his roar,
Mix groans and death; one phial pour,
Of dread Britannia's wrath, and it is made.

XXVI.

Yet, Peace celeſtial! may thy charms
Still fire our breaſts, tho' clad in arms:
If ſcenes of blood avenging fates decree,
For thee the ſword brave Britons wield;
For thee, charge o'er th' embattled field;
Or plunge thro' ſeas, thro' crimſon ſeas, for thee.

XXVII.

Even now for peace the gods are preſs'd;
We woo the nations to be bleſs'd;

For

For peace, victorious Kings! we call to you:
For peace, on pinions of the dove,
Soft emblem of eternal love,
Thro' trackleſs air, and deſart ſkies, I flew.

XXVIII.

My † former lays of rough contents,
Of waves, and wars, and armaments,
Were but as peals of ordnance to confeſs
Your height of dignity, to clear
Your deaf, your late-obſtructed ear,
And wake attention to more mild addreſs.

XXIX.

Have I not heard you both declare,
Your hearts deteſt the purple war,
And melt in anguiſh for the world's repoſe!
Hail then! all hail! your wiſh is crown'd,
Your godlike zeal thro' time renown'd,
Thro' Europe bleſs'd; with joy her heart o'erflows.

XXX.

Your friend, your brother of the North,
To meet your arms, comes ſmiling forth,
And leads ſoft-handed peace: how pow'rful he!
His num'rous race, the bloſſoms bright
Of golden empire, radiant ſight!
Endleſs beam on into eternity.

XXXI.

What long allies!—the virgin train
Your moſt obdurate foes may gain:
See, how their charms in lineal luſtre ſhine!
Thro' ev'ry genuine branch, the fire
Has darted rays of temper'd fire;
The mother breath'd ſoft air, and bloom divine.

XXXII.

† The foregoing ſtanzas.

XXXII.

How fair the field! ye † Aonian bees!
The flow'rs ambroſial fondly ſeize,
Luxurious draw the ſweet Hyblean ſtrain;
That gods may lean from heav'n to hear
And my thron'd patron's raviſh'd ear
The ſoul's rich nectar drink, and thirſt again.

XXXIII.

Even mine they taſte; and with ſucceſs:
Ambition's fumes my ſtrains repreſs;
The fever flies; no noxious thoughts ferment;
No frenzy, taking friends for foes;
The pulſe ſubſides; they ſeek repoſe;
Nor I my winged embaſſy repent.

XXXIV.

No: by the blood of Blenheim's plain,
I ſwear, the rumour'd war is vain;
Shall Gallic faith and friendſhip ever ceaſe?
I ſwear by Europe's lovely dread,
I ſwear by great Eliza's ſhade,
The wiſe Iberian is the friend of peace.

XXXV.

Yet, leſt I fail, (for prophets old
Not all infallibly foretold,)
We ſet our naval terrors in array.
Know, Britons! an AUGUSTUS reigns;
If foes compel, ſend forth your chains,
While haughty thrones, uncenſur'd might obey.

XXXVI.

O could I ſing as you have fought!
I'd raiſe a monument of thought!
Bright as the ſun!—how you burn at my heart!
How

† Ye poets.

How the drums all around,
Soul-riſing reſound!
Swift drawn from the thigh,
How the ſwords flame on high!
How the cannon, deep knell!
Fates of kingdoms foretell!
How to battle, to battle, our fathers brave part,
How to battle, to conqueſt, to triumph, we dart!

XXXVII.

But who gives conqueſt? He, whoſe ray
To darkneſs turns the blaze of day;
Whoſe boundleſs favour far outflows the main;
Whoſe pow'r the raging waves can ſtill,
And curb more rebel human will.—
With peace, O! bleſs us, or in war ſuſtain.

XXXVIII.

Doſt thou ſuſtain?——Ye twinkling fry!
That ſwim the ſeas, glide gently by;
Tho' your ſcales glitter, tho' your numbers ſwarm,
Ah! gently glide, for life's dear ſake;
Nor dare Leviathan awake,
Who ſpouts a river, and who breathes a ſtorm.

XXXIX.

And now, who cenſures this addreſs?
Thus, crowns, ſtates, common men, make peace;
They ſwell, ſoothe, double, dive, ſwear, pray, defy:
And when rank int'reſt has prevail'd,
And artifice the treaty ſeal'd,
Stark love and conſcience own the baſtard tye.

XL.

Ambaſſadors, ye mouths of kings!
Ye miſſive monarchs! empire's wings!
What tho' the muſe your province proudly choſe;

'Tis

'Tis a repriſal fairly made,
Her province you long ſince invade,
Ye perfect poets! in the vale of proſe.

XLI.

More ſafe, O muſe! that humble vale,
Than the proud ſurge and ſtormy gale:
Thy dang'rous ſeas with wrecks are cover'd o'er:
Dulneſs and frenzy curſe thy ſtreams,
Rocks, infamous for murder'd names!
O! ſtrike thy ſwelling ſails, and make to ſhore.

XLII.

While warmer climes, in cooler ſtrains,
Or tented fields, or duſty plains,
The bleeding horſe and horſeman hurl to ground;
'Tis mine to ſing, and ſing the firſt,
That mighty ſhock, that dreadful burſt
Of war, which bellows through the ſeas profound.

XLIII.

Nor mean the ſong, or great my blame;
When ſuch the patrons, ſuch the theme,
Who might not glow, ſoar, pant, with rage divine?
Truth, ſimple truth, I proudly dreſt
In Fancy's robe; her flow'ry veſt
Dipp'd in the curious colours of the Nine.

XLIV.

But, ah! 'tis paſt; I ſink; I faint;
Nor more can glow, or ſoar, or paint;
The refluent raptures from my boſom rowl;
To heav'n returns the ſacred maid,
And all her golden viſions fade,
Ne'er to reviſit my tumultuous ſoul.

XLV.

My vocal ſhell! which Thetis form'd
Beneath the waves, which Venus warm'd

With

With all her charms, (if ancient tales be true,)
And in thy pearly boſom glow'd
Ere Pæan ſilver chords beſtow'd;
My ſhell! which Clio gave, which kings applaud,
Which Europe's bleeding genius call'd abroad,
Adieu, pacific lyre! my laurell'd thrones! adieu.
Hear, Atticus! your ſailor's ſong; I ſing, I live, for you.

THE

THE

INSTALMENT,

MDCCXXVI.

To the RIGHT HONOURABLE

Sir ROBERT WALPOLE.

Quæſitam meritis. HOR.

WITH invocations ſome their breaſts inflame;
I need no muſe, a Walpole is my theme.
Ye mighty dead! ye garter'd ſons of praiſe!
Our morning-ſtars! our boaſt in former days!
Which hov'ring o'er, your purple wings diſplay,
Lur'd by the pomp of this diſtinguiſh'd day,
Stoop and attend: by one the knee be bound;
One, throw the mantle's crimſon folds around;
By that, the ſword on his proud thigh be plac'd,
This claſp the di'mond girdle round his waiſt;
His breaſt, with rays, let juſt Godolphin ſpread;
Wiſe Burleigh plant the plumage on his head;
And Edward own, ſince firſt he fix'd the race,
None preſs'd fair glory with a ſwifter pace.
When Fate would call ſome mighty genius forth,
To wake a drooping age to godlike worth,

Or

Or aid ſome fav'rite king's illuſtrious toil,
It bids his blood with gen'rous ardour boil;
His blood, from Virtue's celebrated ſource,
Pour'd down the ſteep of time, a lengthen'd courſe!
That men prepar'd may juſt attention pay,
Warn'd by the dawn to mark the glorious day,
Whenall the ſcatter'd merits of his line,
Collected to a point intenſely ſhine.
See Britain! ſee thy Walpole ſhine from far,
His azure ribbon, and his radiant ſtar;
A ſtar that, with auſpicious beams, ſhall guide
Thy veſſel ſafe through Fortune's rougheſt tide.
If peace ſtill ſmiles, by this ſhall Commerce ſteer,
A finiſh'd courſe, in triumph round the ſphere;
And gath'ring tribute from each diſtant ſhore,
In Britain's lap the world's abundance pour.
If war's ordain'd, this ſtar ſhall dart its beams
Thro' that black cloud, which riſing from the Thames,
With thunder form'd of Brunſwick's wrath, is ſent
To claim the ſeas, and awe the continent:
This ſhall direct it where the bolt to throw,
A ſtar for us, a comet to the foe.
At this the muſe ſhall kindle, and aſpire:
My breaſt, O Walpole, glows with grateful fire;
The ſtreams of royal bounty, turn'd by thee,
Refreſh the dry domains of poeſy.
My fortune ſhews, when arts are Walpole's care,
What ſlender worth forbids us to deſpair?
Be this thy partial ſmile from cenſure free!
'Twas meant for Merit, though it fell on me.
Since Brunſwick's ſmile has authoris'd my muſe,
Chaſte be her conduct, and ſublime her views.
Falſe praiſes are the whoredoms of the pen,
Which proſtitute fair Fame to worthleſs men.

This

This profanation of celeſtial fire,
Makes fools deſpiſe what Wiſdom ſhould admire.
Let thoſe I praiſe to diſtant times be known,
Not by their author's merit, but their own.
If others think the taſk is hard, to weed
From verſe rank Flattery's vivacious ſeed,
And rooted deep; one means muſt ſet them free;
Patron! and Patriot! let them ſing of thee.
While vulgar trees ignoble honours wear,
Nor thoſe retain when winter chills the year;
The gen'rous orange, fav'rite of the ſun,
With vig'rous charms can through the ſeaſons run;
Defies the ſtorm with her tenacious green;
And flow'rs and fruits in rival pomp are ſeen;
Where bloſſoms fall, ſtill fairer bloſſoms ſpring;
And midſt their ſweets the feather'd poets ſing.
On Walpole thus, may pleas'd Britannia view
At once her ornament, and profit too;
The fruit of ſervice, and the bloom of fame,
Matur'd and gilded by the royal beam.
He, when the nipping blaſts of Envy riſe,
Its guilt can pity, and its rage deſpiſe;
Let fall no honours, but, ſecurely great,
Unfaded, holds the colour of his fate:
No winter knows, though ruffling factions preſs;
By wiſdom deeply rooted in ſucceſs:
One glory ſhed, a brighter is diſplay'd *;
And the charm'd muſes ſhelter in the ſhade.
O how I long, enkindled by the theme,
In deep eternity to launch thy name!
Thy name in view, no rights of verſe I plead,
But what chaſte Truth indites, old Time ſhall read.
"Behold!

* Knight of the Bath, and then of the Garter.

" Behold! a man of ancient faith and blood,
" Which ſoon beat high for arts, and public good;
" Whoſe glory great, but natural, appears,
" The genuine growth of ſervices and years;
" No ſudden exhalation drawn on high,
" And fondly gilt by partial majeſty:
" One bearing greateſt toils with greateſt eaſe;
" One born to ſerve us, and yet born to pleaſe;
" Whom, while our rights in equal ſcales he lays,
" The prince may truſt, and yet the people praiſe
" His genius ardent, yet his judgment clear,
" His tongue is flowing, and his heart ſincere;
" His counſel guides, his temper chears, our iſle;
" And, ſmiling, gives three kingdoms cauſe to ſmile."

Joy then to Britain, bleſs'd with ſuch a ſon;
To Walpole joy, by whom the prize is won;
Who nobly conſcious meets the ſmiles of Fate;
True greatneſs lyes in daring to be great.
Let daſtard ſouls, in affectation, run
To ſhades, nor wear bright honours fairly won;
Such men prefer, miſled by falſe applauſe,
The pride of modeſty to Virtue's cauſe.
Honours, which make the face of Virtue fair,
'Tis great to merit, and 'tis wiſe to wear;
'Tis holding up the prize to public view,
Confirms grown Virtue, and inflames the new;
Heightens the luſtre of our age and clime,
And ſheds rich ſeeds of worth for future time.

Proud chiefs alone, in fields of ſlaughter fam'd,
Of old, this azure bloom of glory claim'd;
As, when ſtern Ajax pour'd a purple flood,
The violet roſe, fair daughter of his blood.
Now rival wiſdom dares the wreath divide,
And both Minervas riſe in equal pride;

Proclaiming

Proclaiming loud, a monarch fills the throne,
Who ſhines illuſtrious, not in wars alone.
Let Fame look lovely in Britannia's eyes;
They coldly court deſert, who Fame deſpiſe:
For what's ambition, but fair Virtue's ſail?
And what applauſe, but her propitious gale?
When, ſwell'd with that, ſhe fleets before the wind
To glorious aims, as to the port deſign'd;
When chain'd, without it, to the lab'ring oar,
She toils! ſhe pants! nor gains the flying ſhore;
From her ſublime purſuits, or turn'd aſide
By blaſts of Envy, or by Fortune's tide:
For one that has ſucceeded, ten are loſt,
Of equal talents, ere they make the coaſt.
Then let Renown to worth divine incite,
With all her beams, but throw thoſe beams aright.
Then Merit droops, and Genius downward tends,
When godlike Glory like our land deſcends.
Cuſtom the Garter long confin'd to few;
And gave to Birth exalted Virtue's due:
Walpole has thrown the proud incloſure down;
And high deſert embraces fair renown.
Tho' rival'd, let the Peerage ſmiling ſee,
(Smiling in juſtice to their own decree,)
This proud reward of majeſty beſtow'd
On worth like that, whence firſt the peerage flow'd.
From frowns of Fate, Britannia's bliſs to guard,
Let ſubjects merit, and let kings reward.
Gods are moſt gods by giving to excell;
And kings moſt like them, by rewarding well.
Though ſtrong the twanging nerve, and, drawn a-right,
Short is the winged arrow's upward flight;
But if an eagle it transfix on high,
Lodg'd in the wound it ſoars into the ſky.

Thus

Thus while I ſing thee with unequal lays,
And wound perhaps that worth I mean to praiſe;
Yet I tranſcend myſelf, I riſe in fame,
Not lifted by my genius, but my theme.
No more: for in this dread ſuſpence of Fate,
Now kingdoms fluctuate, and in dark debate
Weigh peace and war; now Europe's eyes are bent
On mighty Brunſwick, for the great event,
Brunſwick, of kings the terror or defence!
Who dares detain thee at a world's expence?

END OF THE FIFTH VOLUME.

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